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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH, 2004

17 REASONS NOT TO SLIT YOUR WRISTS...

By Michael Moore

Dear Friends,

Ok, it sucks. Really sucks. But before you go and cash it all in, let's, in the words of Monty Python, "always look on the bright side of life!" There IS some good news from Tuesday's election. Here are 17 reasons not to slit your wrists:

1. It is against the law for George W. Bush to run for president again.

2. Bush's victory was the NARROWEST win for a sitting president since Woodrow Wilson in 1916.

3. The only age group in which the majority voted for Kerry was young adults (Kerry: 54%, Bush: 44%), proving once again that your parents are always wrong and you should never listen to them.

4. In spite of Bush's win, the majority of Americans still think the country is headed in the wrong direction (56%), think the war wasn't worth fighting (51%), and don't approve of the job George W. Bush is doing (52%). (Note to foreigners: Don't try to figure this one out. It's an American thing, like Pop Tarts.)

5. The Republicans will not have a filibuster-proof 60-seat majority in the Senate. If the Democrats do their job, Bush won't be able to pack the Supreme Court with right-wing ideologues. Did I say "if the Democrats do their job?" Um, maybe better to scratch this one.

6. Michigan voted for Kerry! So did the entire Northeast, the birthplace of our democracy. So did 6 of the 8 Great Lakes States. And the whole West Coast! Plus Hawaii. Ok, that's a start. We've got most of the fresh water, all of Broadway, and Mt. St. Helens. We can dehydrate them or bury them in lava. And no more show tunes!

7. Once again we are reminded that the buckeye is a nut, and not just any old nut — a poisonous nut. A great nation was felled by a poisonous nut. May Ohio State pay dearly this Saturday when it faces Michigan.

8. 88% of Bush's support came from white voters. In 50 years, America will no longer have a white majority. Hey, 50 years isn't such a long time! If you're ten years old and reading this, your golden years will be truly golden and you will be well cared for in your old

age.

9. Gays, thanks to the ballot measures passed on Tuesday, cannot get married in 11 new states. Thank God. Just think of all those wedding gifts we won't have to buy now.

10. Five more African Americans were elected as members of Congress, including the return of Cynthia McKinney of Georgia. It's always good to have more blacks in there fighting for us and doing the job our candidates can't.

11. The CEO of Coors was defeated for Senate in Colorado. Drink up!

12. Admit it: We like the Bush twins and we don't want them to go away.

13. At the state legislative level, Democrats picked up a net of at least 3 chambers in Tuesday's elections. Of the 98 partisan-controlled state legislative chambers (house/assembly and senate), Democrats went into the 2004 elections in control of 44 chambers, Republicans controlled 53 chambers, and 1 chamber was tied. After Tuesday, Democrats now control 47 chambers, Republicans control 49 chambers, 1 chamber is tied and 1 chamber (Montana House) is still undecided.

14. Bush is now a lame duck president. He will have no greater moment than the one he's having this week. It's all downhill for him from here on out — and, more significantly, he's just not going to want to do all the hard work that will be expected of him. It'll be like everyone's last month in 12th grade — you've already made it, so it's party time! Perhaps he'll treat the next four years like a permanent Friday, spending even more time at the ranch or in Kennebunkport. And why shouldn't he? He's already proved his point, avenged his father and kicked our ass.

15. Should Bush decide to show up to work and take this country down a very dark road, it is also just as likely that either of the follow-

ing two scenarios will happen: a) Now that he doesn't ever need to pander to the Christian conservatives again to get elected, someone may whisper in his ear that he should spend these last four years building "a legacy" so that history will render a kinder verdict on him and thus he will not push for too aggressive a right-wing agenda; or b) He will become so cocky and arrogant — and thus, reckless — that he will commit a blunder of such major proportions that even his own party will have to remove him from office.

16. There are nearly 300 million Americans — 200 million of them of voting age. We only lost by three and a half million! That's not a landslide — it means we're almost there. Imagine losing by 20 million. If you had 58 yards to go before you reached the goal line and then you barreled down 55 of those yards, would you stop on the three yard line, pick up the ball and go home crying — especially when you get to start the next down on the three yard line? Of course not! Buck up! Have hope! More sports analogies are coming!!!

17. Finally and most importantly, over 55 million Americans voted for the candidate dubbed "The #1 Liberal in the Senate." That's more than the total number of voters who voted for either Reagan, Bush I, Clinton or Gore. Again, more people voted for Kerry than Reagan. If the media are looking for a trend it should be this — that so many Americans were, for the first time since Kennedy, willing to vote for an out-and-out liberal. The country has always been filled with evangelicals — that is not news. What IS news is that so many people have shifted toward a Massachusetts liberal. In fact, that's BIG news. Which means, don't expect the mainstream media, the ones who brought you the Iraq War, to ever report the real truth about November 2, 2004. In fact, it's better that they don't. We'll need the element of surprise in 2008.

Feeling better? I hope so. As my friend Mort wrote me yesterday, "My Romanian grandfather used to say to me, 'Remember, Morton, this is such a wonderful country — it doesn't even need a president!'"

But it needs us.

Yours,

Michael Moore

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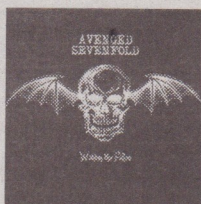
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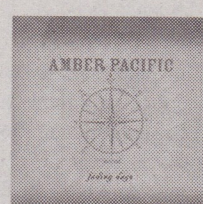
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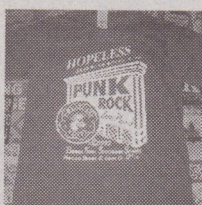
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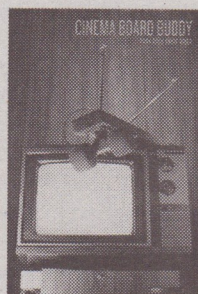
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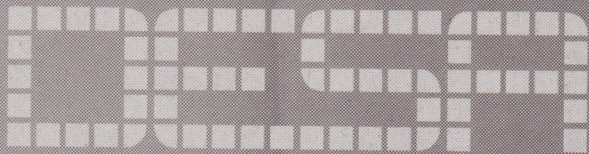
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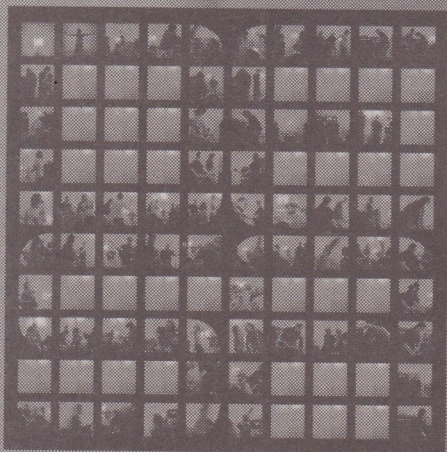
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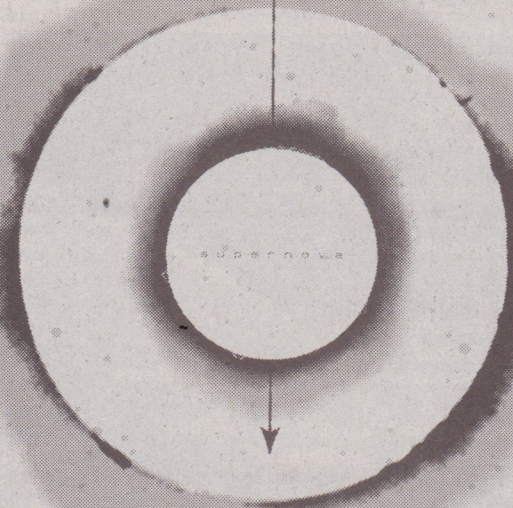
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HEADS OF WHATEVER

Brett Mathews
John Joh

CHEAP EDITORS

Scooter

NEWS EDITOR

Aubin Paul

DESIGN/LAYOUT

John Joh

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Lisa Root

FEARLESS CONTRIBUTORS

Anarchy Alicia, Mitch Cardwell, Jimi Cheetah, Ramsey Kanaan, Don Sill, Sammy The Mick, Laura Davis, Jesse Luscious, Rev. Nerb, Alan Bisbort, Matt "Windbreaker" Cote, Aubin Paul and all @ Punknews.org, Jason H., Duncan Moore, Kristopher Todd Upjohn, Paul Saitowitz, Courtney Riot, Brian Peterson, Russ Rankin, Alan Wright, Al Quint, Jordan Brown, Janelle Jones, Angele Lalonde (our reporter from the Great White North), Mel Cheplowitz, Jack Rabid, Thee Whiskey Rebel, Dane Jackson, Dulcie Younger, Falin Minoru, Jasper van den Dobbelen, and those listed individually on their contributions.

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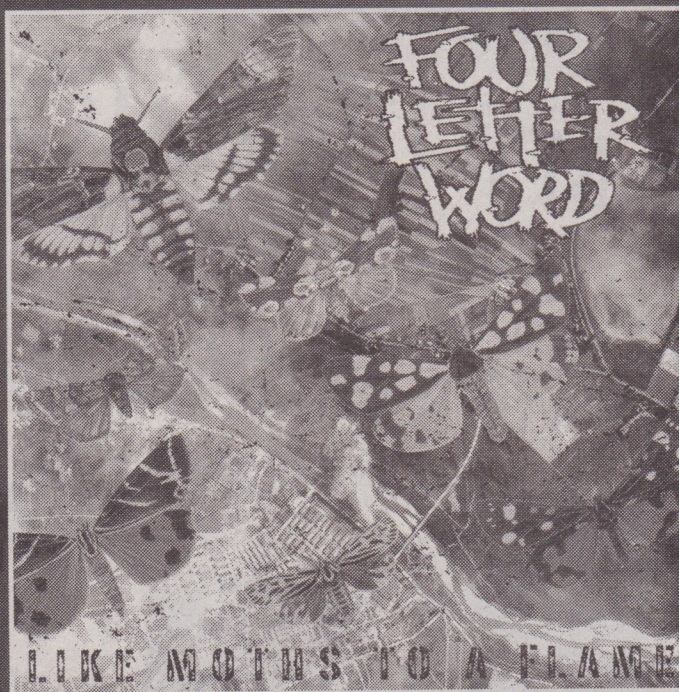
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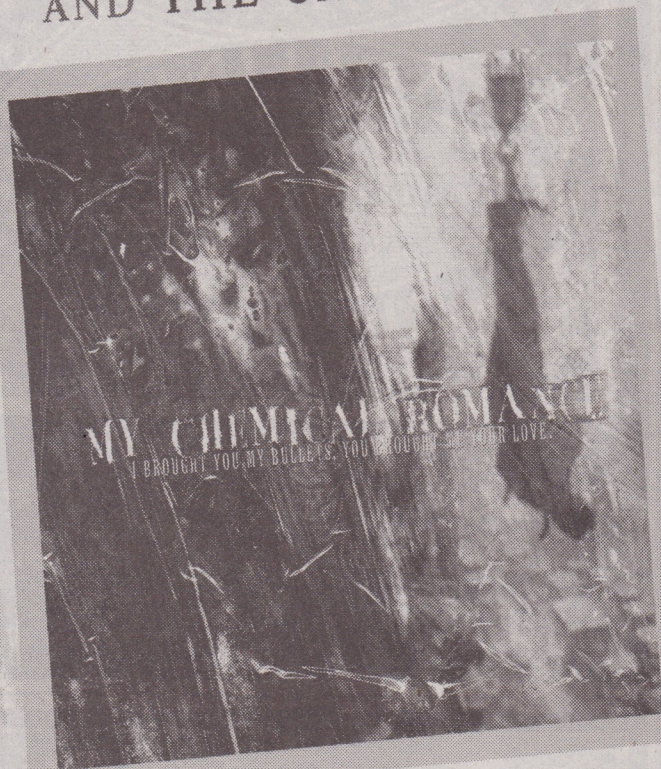
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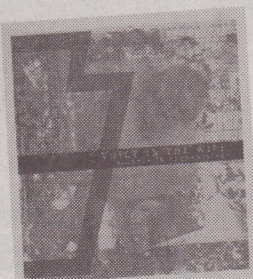
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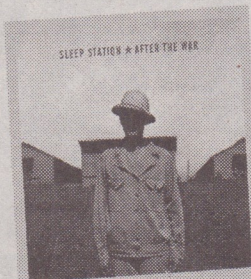


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WORD ON THE STREET

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John Peel 1939-2004

Legendary BBC broadcaster John Peel has died at the age of 65, while on holiday in Peru. He was BBC Radio 1's longest-serving DJ and in recent years had also presented Home Truths on Radio 4. He was most famous for being one of the first DJs to give exposure to punk, reggae and hip-hop, long before they crossed over into the mainstream. He was equally renowned for his legendary "John Peel sessions", where bands were invited to record exclusive tracks for the programme in a BBC studio. Sessions were usually four tracks recorded and mixed in a single day; as such they often had a "rough and ready", demo-like feel, somewhere between a live performance and a finished recording.

Peel was Melody Maker's DJ of the year eleven times, Sony Broadcaster of the Year in 1993, "Godlike Genius Award" from the NME in 1994, Sony Gold Award winner in 2002 and is a member of the Radio Academy Hall of Fame. He gained several honorary degrees including two doctorates and an honorary fellowship of Liverpool John Moores University. He was appointed an OBE in 1998, for his services to British music.

Peel was so singularly important to so many types of progressive music, from reggae and punk to hardcore and grind. Some would say he was the most important DJ since the dawn of radio, and it is hard to imagine that any broadcaster will ever come close to matching his legacy.

Without his support, who knows how many creative, genre-defining bands would have been relegated to undeserved obscurity.

Independent, and progressive music have lost their greatest advocate and biggest fan.

He will be greatly missed, and we wish the best to his family and friends.

System of a Down promises Hypnotize/Mesmerize in 2005

The critically acclaimed System of a Down have announced their follow up to Toxicity will be released as a two album set split over two release dates separated by six months.

The first half, titled Hypnotize will be in stores late first quarter 2005, while Disc 2 (Mesmerize) is expected to see a late Summer/early Fall 2005 release date on the American Recordings/Columbia Records label. The band is currently in a Los

Angeles studio doing vocals.

A-F Records parts ways with Tabula Rasa, Virus Nine, Inhuman

A-F Records made this announcement this afternoon regarding their now-reduced roster:

We are saddened to announce that we have had to part ways with the following A-F Records bands: Tabula Rasa, Virus Nine, and Inhuman.

As some of you may know, a severe flood hit A-F Records on Sept 17th, causing thousands of dollars in damage and driving us from our low-rent office space. Quick action by the A-F Records staff saved the majority of our computers and inventory, which is why A-F Records still exists today. Unfortunately, the flood left the label in a weakened financial position. After evaluating our current situation, it became obvious that we cannot afford to maintain the roster we were carrying prior to the flood. We were and still are big fans of Tabula Rasa, Virus 9, and Inhuman, and we're very sorry to part ways but it is necessary due to our current situation.

A-F Records wishes nothing but the best for each and every person associated with these great groups!

Lead singer of Suffocate Faster stabbed during Bleeding Through performance

Chris Alsip, the lead singer of Cincinnati hardcore band Suffocate Faster, was stabbed by a bouncer during Bleeding Through's show at Bogarts in Cincinnati, Ohio Monday night. Witnesses have reported that 10 minutes into Bleeding Through's set a fight broke out in the pit between Alsip and a bouncer. During the altercation the bouncer allegedly drew a knife and stabbed Alsip in the stomach. He was taken to University Hospital, where he's listed in stable condition. A second victim showed up later at the University Hospital saying he had been hurt in the fight, but the extent of his injuries are unknown.

After the incident happened Bleeding Through lead singer Brandon Schieppati addressed the crowd that a close friend of the band had been stabbed, how he believed everyone should be welcome at a Bleeding Through show, and that the violence displayed was uncalled for. The band promptly left stage to join Alsip in the hos-

EDITOR

Aubin Paul

NEWS EDITORS

Adam White, Brian Shultz

REVIEWS EDITOR

Brian Shultz

RELEASE SCHEDULE EDITOR

Hein Terweduwe

CONTRIBUTERS

News is contributed by hundreds of readers, and industry insiders, as well as bands, friends, angry ex-girlfriends, angry ex-boyfriends, animals (hypothetically) and well-wishers of all races, cultures and anthropomorphic persuasions.

News Briefs

- Thrive DVD pushed back to early '05
- Pietasters DVD out in January
- Maxeen forgoes Motion City Soundtrack / Tsunami Bomb tour to focus on writing
- Hellcat signs The Unseen
- Pork Dukes visiting the US
- New Unwritten Law album out February 2005
- The Network reissue full length on Reprise and release new DVD
- Thick signs Fingers Cut Megamachine
- The birth of Bella Lea (ex-Denali)
- Bigmouth to release No Trigger "discography" album / guitarist search
- The Postal Service and the postal service reach agreement
- Tsunami Bomb finds replacement guitarist
- Of Faith And Fire signs to Nervous Breakdown Records

- Stimulus inks deal with Stowaway Records
- Hot Cross and Transistor Transistor to tour
- Disaster signs The HollowPoints and Civet
- Karsten leaves HorrorPops / new record in May 05
- Sticks & Stones reunite for surprise Halloween show
- The Libertines off the road for the foreseeable future
- BANKSHOT! signs The Glow / Charges against Mr. Bankshot dropped
- Short Round loses drummer and bassist
- Common Cloud signs Ammi
- Fractured Transmitter announces Melvins Tribute
- Sleater-Kinney signs to Sub Pop
- 7 Seconds playing with Bobby Jordan (Mr. T Experience)
- Achilles signs to HEX
- Abacus signs Maroon
- No Innocent Victim reunite
- Greg Graffin to publish PhD dissertation
- Robotic Empire to release Cursive singles record
- Bad Religion shooting a DVD in Hollywood
- Comeback Kid signs to Victory Records
- Psyopus signs to Metal Blade
- Mike Griffen leaves Tsunami Bomb
- Asian Man Records to re-release Screeching Weasel catalogue
- 60% of A Perfect Murder Quits
- Dante leaves Hot Hot Heat
- Brazil loses Bassist but Continues Tour
- The Oval Portrait break up; remaining members seek vocalist for new project
- Punkcore signs The Messengers
- Zombie Apocalypse full length in '05
- H2O's Adam Blake out of hospital

pital. The remainder of the show, a MTV2 Headbangers Ball Tour date with Himsa, Arch Enemy, Bleeding Through and Cradle Of Filth, was called off.

5 arrested as Leftover Crack concert ends in riot

Five people were arrested after a November 6th Leftover Crack show in New York City's East Village. A New York Times article described the situation as "a noisy confrontation with the police that witnesses described as a throwback to the larger and more violent clashes that rocked the same East Village park more than a decade ago."

Accounts of the cause for the clash vary at this point. Some witnesses reported to the Times that a beer bottle was thrown into the air from the crowd, landing atop a nearby parked police van. It was also reported that two officers entered the crowd to arrest a man who was apparently drunk during Leftover Crack's final song. The article states that after the concertgoers turned on the officers:

Moments later, more than 30 officers surrounded the crowd, and a police helicopter appeared overhead. When the officers brought the concert to an abrupt end and ordered everyone out of the park, several people objected, and more beer bottles were thrown in the direction of the police, witnesses said. It ended quickly, with a crowd of concertgoers lumbering noisily west on St. Marks Place, which the police closed briefly to traffic between Avenue A and Second Avenue.

The article reports the size of the crowd at 400, but Bankshot Records is reporting that it was closer to in size to between 800 and 1000. There were no reported injuries from the conflict, with four men and one woman charged with disorderly conduct.

Dropkick Murphys show in China cancelled

Dropkick Murphys have announced that their trip to perform in China has been cancelled. Here's the details from Epitaph:

We regret to announce that our show in China has been canceled. After months of planning and looking forward to playing in Beijing we were recently notified that the government has withdrawn the permits for the show and the authorities will not grant the band visas so they can perform there. It seems that although China is trying to open up more to the western world they are not ready for a punk rock band to put on a show there and apparently there were concerns for the safety of their citizens if the show was to go ahead. Thanks to all the kids from China that emailed us, we're sorry we can't come and hope that circumstances will change over the next few years so we can plan something like this again.

A Wilhelm Scream in pre-production for next record

A Wilhelm Scream are preparing for their next record and follow up to Mute Print. Here's their update: "we're in the middle of the battle royale we call pre-production for our new album that we're gonna record in March with Bill Stevenson and Jason Livermore at the Blasting Room. We're excited about the new stuff (because it's hard for us to play. boo-hoo)and we're busting our asses so we hope ya like it."

Leftover Crack still together, touring after chaos in Arizona

Alternative Tentacles is clearing up recent internet rumors that Leftover Crack has called it quits. The label is reporting that the band "ended the latest leg of their extensive touring with a chaotic night in Arizona. The events at the Brickyard in Phoenix, Arizona and their implications as to the future of Leftover Crack have been hotly debated on the internet. The band's frontman, Stza Crack wanted to set the record straight and stress that the band has NOT broken up and no shows will be cancelled on the band's upcoming European and Southern US tours."

Stza posted about the incident on the band's website:

...in regards to our halloween show in pheonix, we apologize for having such a short set, about ten things went wrong that night (i already got kicked out of the club by the "disgusted" club owners prior to our set)and we are starting to think it is bad luck for us to dress like police officers, but we'll take our chances.

we are going to start working on a plan to play a free show in the pheonix area at some point next year, although we expect fascist resistance from the various types of skin-heads inhabiting your arizona valley(not all have shorn scalps), but if our fans are willing to have our backs again, then we will risk getting lynched by your prolific community of bone-heads. we love you pheonix, we will make it up to you. and to everyone else thanks for coming out & making the west coast a good time.

What have the members of Dag Nasty been up to?

Dag Nasty has updated their website with the whereabouts and projects of their members:

Colin's new band Handgun Bravado released an LP called "These Days Move Fast" a few months ago, and it's available on Firefly Records. Dave's Sharpshooters are back in action, playing a few shows here and there. Peter Cortner's new band The Gerunds are hard at work on their debut release. You can check out their website here. Shawn Brown's band Jesuseater

broke up. And while we're talking about Shawn - Jade Tree records has the entire first Swiz demo with Ramsey available for download on their website. Brian Baker is wrapping up the final leg of this year's Bad Religion tour, which concludes November 20th in Hollywood. Brian also had a one night stand with The Looters DC in WDC in September. The band consisted of Brian, Jeff Turner and Dante Ferrando from Gray Matter, and Andy Rapoport from Kingface. They performed a few songs at the Black Cat anniversary party, and word on the street is that it was pretty amazing. Some pictures and video can be seen here, courtesy of Kevin Young.

Jesse Townley (aka Jesse Luscious) doesn't win election, but we love him anyways

The Frisk frontman Jesse Luscious sent us in his thoughts on his recent campaign for Berkeley City Council:

I'm astounded and thankful for the wide support you've given me over the past 6 months of my campaign for Berkeley City Council. You came to fundraiser shows, booked fundraisers, played fundraisers, donated money, and donated time. With your help we walked the entire district and ensured that every voter in our district got at least 2 campaign pieces from our campaign- even though we were operating on a smaller, grassroots budget than the eventual winner.

While we did not win, we made a positive change at the local level. We met each other and our neighbors. We kept attention on important issues like development, public financing, and rent control. We worked as a community for the things we believe in.

Impala challenges Sony BMG merger

Impala, a trade group representing over 2,000 independent European labels the labels, is set to challenge the European Commission's approval of the Sony/BMG merger. The deal was approved earlier this year, consolidating the music industry into four major conglomerates from five.

Impala President Michel Lambot commented that

"This is about protecting European, as well as worldwide, cultural diversity and self-determination in a world where globalization means Hollywood... The news coming in today from the U.S. elections affirms our decision that we need to make a stance against U.S. domination of our cultural, political and economic interests."

The European Commission approved the deal in July, creating the 50-50 New York based joint venture between Japan's Sony Corp and Germany's Bertelsmann AG. The Commission did not disclose the specifics of its ruling until this September, which

delayed Impala's decision on whether to appeal.

This is being talked about in many of the major news sources, check out the details in Reuters and BBC News.

Cave In's recording / writing plans

Cave In have returned home from their tour with Converge and have since addressed some of the questions on their follow up to Antenna. Here's what they announced:

We've been asked numerous times about when the next Cave In album will be released. As great as it is that a good amount of people seem to take an interest in this, we don't presently have the ability to say when it will actually happen. We can tell you this: out of the ten or so tunes we've written since Antenna, we're still excited about maybe half of them at this point. And since some members of the band now live in different parts of the country, the writing process as we have known it for the past 2 or 3 years is going to change. We don't plan on regrouping together to work on new material until 2005, and as of this writing, there is not even an estimated time frame as to when we'll enter back into a studio to actually record.

Meanwhile the Converge / Cave In project, dubbed Virgin, is under way. The bands are looking to reconvene in Salem, MA at God City Studio in December and/or January to continue work on it.

Millencolin completes recording

Millencolin have completed work on their upcoming record. They posted this on their official website:

We are now finally done with the recording of our new album! We are really satisfied how it came out! It's really hard for us to explain the direction of the new songs, since we've lived with them for so long now and are too used to them. But it's faster and less rock-influenced compared to Home From Home. More punk with melodies we're pretty sure you'll like!

The band is aiming for a March 2005 release for the record.

Wizo calling it quits

Wizo's new record Anderster was released on HULK RfCKORZ/SPV/Germany this Monday. According to the band's website the record contains (and you'll forgive what's lost in translation from German) "14 songs with different history's of origin and recording." The band has decided against doing any promotional activities for the release outside of their newsletters to fans.

This release however comes with the announcement that the band is calling it quits. Here's the english version of their press release:

WIZO will stop beeing a real existing band

after the tour in march 2005. We rather concentrate on remaining "the legend of the glorious nineties" in the minds of our fans. Axel Kurth, head of the band decidet to leave WIZO as a part of his musical work behind: "After 18 years of fun, stress and scandals with WIZO, the concept of a "punkrockband" finally became to reactionary and to boring for me. Punk stays my way of life, time for new things."

The band is headed out on a farewell tour starting on January 13th of '05. They're planning shows in Germany, Austria and Switzerland with guests Rock'n'Roll Stormtroopers.

Bane promises The Note for Spring 2005

Bane posted a little something about their long awaited follow up to 2001's Give Blood:

"[W]e have been hard at work writing new material. The new record will be called The Note and will be out next spring.

Ourselves: Snapcase side project announced

A new Snapcase side project has debuted under the moniker Ourselves. The band features Snapcase members Frank Vicario (guitar), Dustin Perry (bass) and Ben Lythberg (drums) along with a second guitarist named Steve (no last name is known as of yet). The band has posted two songs up on PureVolume, one being an untitled tune with no vocals, the other a cover of Jawbox's "Breathe" with vocals by Vicario. You can expect more details on the group when their website is launched.

Nightmare Of You (ex-MovieLife) EP out Jan. 2005, full-length tentative summer

Nightmare Of You will be releasing their debut EP January 2005 on their own yet-to-be-named label, with a full-length to follow in the early summer. The band is the "new" project from Brandon Reilly, ex-guitarist of the now defunct MovieLife.

Future of Glassjaw?

Glassjaw fansite Glassjaw.net posted a statement from guitarist Todd Weinstock:

Over a year ago in August, Glassjaw played our last show after years of touring and we decided to take a hiatus. We were all fried and needed time to do our own things. It got to the point where we were on top of each other way too much and it was starting to take its toll. Everyone decided to take some time off and do what they wanted to do for awhile. Fast Forward to a few weeks ago; people start asking me about this Glassjaw show in December that I know nothing about. So I look on the computer and find that there is a confirmed show.

After thinking this was a mistake I called [Justin] Beck and just wanted to clarify. I found out Beck's vision of Glassjaw these days is vastly different than mine. As far as I know, Beck plans to play the show with only himself on guitar, Daryl, and two hired musicians on drums on bass. After seeing Beck's vision of Glassjaw I realized I was not part of it anymore.

I didn't quit the band, I'm just not in it anymore. I'm not really sure what the future of Glassjaw will be, if any. For almost 10 years of my life I've had some of the most amazing times with Glassjaw. I've met great people, bands, friends, and made great music that will always be a part of me. I didn't expect it to end like this but I have to move on.

The band's last release was 2002's *Worship and Tribute*, though vocalist Daryl Palumbo joined Dan The Automator to release *Decadence*, under the name *Head Automatica*.

Staring Back finds singer

Staring Back have found their new vocalist. Indiana's Jason Bradley will fill the hole that had originally opened up this past February.

The Gamits call it quits

The Gamits sent out the following:

Hey everybody. Chris here. The Gamits are calling it quits. Yes, it's true. There are many reasons for this happening. Mainly it is just time to move on.

The band released their final record, *Antidote* earlier this year.

Paul Simonon compiles Clash influences comp for '05 release on Trojan

In early 2005 Trojan Records will release a compilation of classic ska, reggae and rock acts songs that influenced and inspired The Clash. *Revolution Rock: A Clash Of Reggae, Rock & R'n'B* was co-compiled by Clash bassist Paul Simonon with liner-notes by writer Chris Salewiz. The set includes the original versions of many of the Clash's covers, including "Junco Partner" by James Booker, "Brand New Cadillac" by Vince Taylor & His Playboys, "I Fought The Law" by the Bobby Fuller Four, "Pressure Drop" by Toots & The Maytals, "Police And Thieves" by Junior Murvin and many more. Click below for the full track listing.

Andrew "Stig" Sewell of Icons Of Filth

Greg from Go Kart Records just wrote us with this very sad news he received this morning:

At 3.10 a.m., Saturday October 23rd the vocalist for Icons of Filth, Andrew Sewell, better known as "Stig" died. Icons of Filth

were playing a gig in a squat in Hackney when Stig complained of feeling unwell and we cut our set short so that he could go outside to get some fresh air. Shortly afterwards he collapsed and died, most likely from a brain hemorrhage but possibly a heart attack. He was an avid drinker but on this occasion had only drank 4 cans of lager. He didn't touch illegal drugs of any sort but within 4 hours of his death rumors surfaced about a possible heroin overdose. These rumors are of course ridiculous and insulting to a man whose body was not yet cold. What is the matter with some people? Anyway, when you're having a drink tonight, think of Stig and remember a man who lived life on his own terms but cared immensely about the world around him.

Cheers, Pete

Greg commented "In all my years of running Go-kart I have never met a more honest, compassionate and caring man than Stig. He never spoke a bad word about anyone and believed truly in the values that were represented in the Icons songs. Stig was truly an inspiration and we should all aspire to be half the man he was. He will be missed by anyone who ever came in contact with him. As soon as I have any information regarding where to send condolences I will post them."

We'd like to express our deepest condolences to Stig's friends and family.

Greg Shaw of Bomp Records: 1949-2004

Bomp Records founder Greg Shaw passed away this past Tuesday, October 19th from heart failure at the age of 55. The press release from the legendary indie label states:

"Greg's lifelong devotion to discovering, raving about and releasing authentic -albeit obscure- rock & roll, and promoting rock fandom over four decades was extraordinary. Among his many accomplishments were fanzine publisher, magazine editor, band manager, author, indie label owner, and rock historian. Though his roles often varied, two things were absolutely consistent: his impeccable taste in music and the ability to be there first."

Greg started a rock zine titled *Mojo-Navigator Rock & Roll News* in San Francisco in '66. A few years after he put out another zine called *Who Put the Bomp!* which featured such noted rock journalists as Lester Bangs, Greil Marcus, Dave Marsh and Richard Meltzer. Bomp Records was launched in 1974 with the release of the Flaminí Groovies' *You Tore Me Down* single. Bomp will continue to release the music that was Greg's legacy under the guidance of Suzy Shaw and Alive/Total Energy's Patrick Boissel. They note that "However you choose to honor Greg's memory-- do it with anything but a moment of silence"

Our deepest condolences go out to Greg's friends and family.

Treephort joins Widney High for Charity Record and Performance

Treephort and the Kids of Widney High are planning to collaborate on a charity recording and performance with the proceeds going to The Kids of Widney High (KOWH) Music Program, which provides instruments and education to the developmentally disabled students at Widney High School in Los Angeles. The group plans to record the single *Nice To Meet You, Part 2* on October 27th for a early 2005 release, and then will play a free, all ages show.

A Wilhelm Scream planning next album

A Wilhelm Scream will start work on their follow up to *Mute Print* soon. The band plans to give fans a preview of their new material in a few months, so check their website for demos later this year. Recording is set to commence in early 2005.

Reel Big Fish recording / part ways with Tyler Jones

Reel Big Fish went into the studio recently to start recording their new album and follow up to *Cheer Up*. However the band recently dismissed trumpet player Tyler Jones. Frontman Aaron Barrett has been writing about it in his online journal:

It's sad times a little bit though, we had to let tyler jones go. it was a hard decision but one that definitely was best for the band. i had no personal beef against him, he wasn't a bad guy at all, but just like any room mate situation, especially where there are such varying personalities involved, everybody can't always get along. it's hard to be out on the road all the time and some people make it harder with drama and shit-talking and constant confrontations. i hope the band can get along better now.

Josh Ansley leaving Streetlight Manifesto

Bassist Josh Ansley will no longer be performing as a member of the band. According to Streetlight's website, "He's left the band and is moving on to pursue other goals. We wish him the best and will miss him and his bass wizardry. There'll be a temp bassist filling in for a bit while we look for a full time touring bassist to join our little family." That show was also Streetlight's last "for a bit, while we regroup and prepare for a future filled with touring and recording." ☛

DEC 2004/JAN 2005 RELEASE SCHEDULE

DATE	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
12/1	Revolvers, The	It's Christmastime Again (7")	People Like You
12/7	7 Seconds / Kill Your Idols	Split 7"	Side One Dummy
12/7	Island View Drive	What Will It Take	Acutest
12/14	Bullet Treatment / Nipples, The	Split (7")	Basement
1/4	Sinai Beach	Immersed	Facedown
1/4	Various	Facedown Fest 2004 (DVD)	Facedown
1/11	Every New Day	The Shadows Cast	Hand Of Hope
1/11	Summer's End	S/T	Hand Of Hope
1/17	Various	Independent Revolution	Lockjaw
1/18	Circle Jerks	Live at the House Of Blues (DVD)	Kung Fu
1/25	Agnostic Front	Another Voice	Nuclear Blast
1/25	Comeback Kid, The	tba (full-length)	Victory
1/25	Cursed	II	Goodfellow
1/25	Forward To Death	Death Therapy	Perfect Victim
1/25	Kill Your Idols	From Companionship To Competition	Side One Dummy
1/25	Plain White T's	All That We Needed	Fearless
1/25	Plot To Blow Up The Eiffel Tower	Love in the Fascist Brothel	Revelation
1/25	Smackdown, The	Calling The Spots	Goodfellow
1/25	Street Dogs	Back To The World	Side One Dummy
1/25	Strength Approach	Sick Hearts Die Young	Wynona
1/25	Strike Anywhere	To Live In Discontent	Jade Tree
1/31	Goldfinger	Disconnection Notice	Maverick
1/31	Playing Enemy	tba (CD +CDep)	Hawthorne Street



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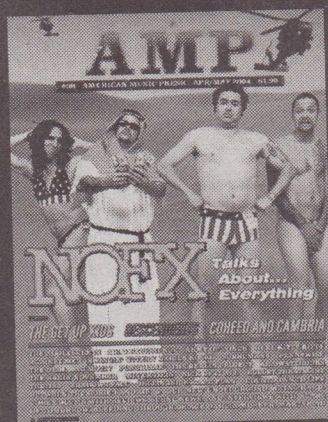
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ALKALINE TRIO
GOOD MOURNING



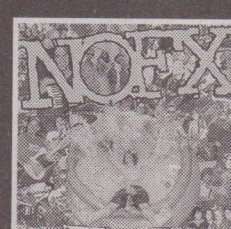
DESTRUCTION MADE SIMPLE
TERROR STRICKEN YOUTH



STEEL TRAIN
1969



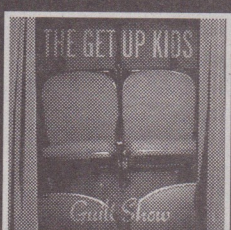
AGE OF RUIN
TIDES OF TRAGEDY



NOFX
THE GREATEST SONGS EVER
(BY US)



DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL
A MARK, A MISSION, A BRAND, A SCAR



THE GET UP KIDS
GUILT SHOW



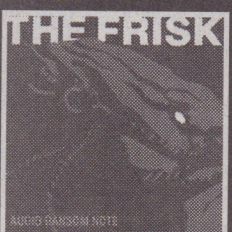
THE SLANDERIN
RHUMBA OF RATTLESNAKES, A
MURDER OF CROWS



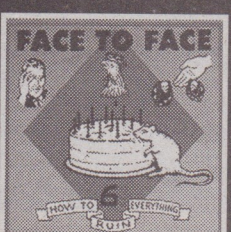
THE BANNER
YOUR MURDER MIX TAPE



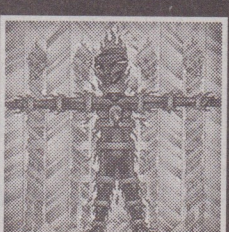
LINK
THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT



THE FRISK
AUDIO RANSOM NOTE



FACE TO FACE
HOW TO RUIN EVERYTHING



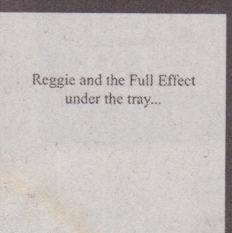
REHASHER
OFF KEY MELODIES



ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT
LIVE FROM CAMP X-RAY



WHATEVER IT TAKES
A FISTFUL OF REVOLUTION



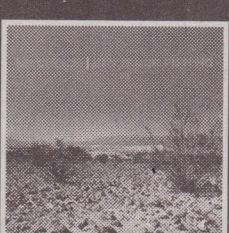
**REGGIE AND THE FULL
EFFECT**
UNDER THE TRAY...



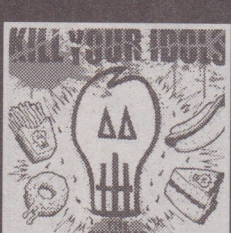
LOVE IS RED
HARDEST FIGHT



HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE
THE PARALLEL UNIVERSE OF...



NO CHOICE
DRY RIVER FISHING



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THE SKINNIER YEARS

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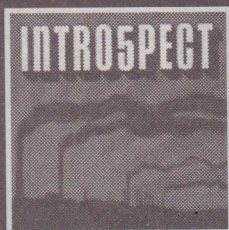
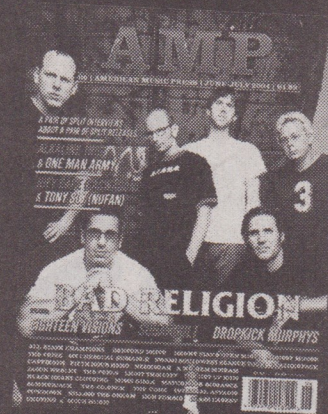
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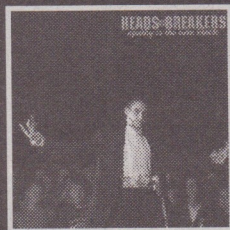
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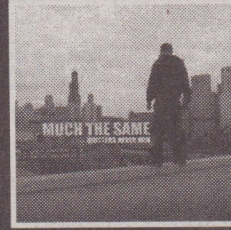
HEADS VS. BREAKERS
APATHY IS THE NEW BLACK



TRUE NORTH
SOMEWHAT SIMILAR



GOOD RIDDANCE
COVER UPS



MUCH THE SAME
QUITTERS NEVER WIN



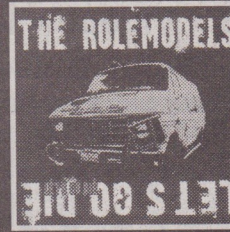
HOUSE OF HEROES
WHAT YOU WANT IS NOW



THE VACANCY
THE VACANCY



OUTLIE
COMPANIONS TO DEVILS AND SAINTS



THE ROLEMODELS
LET'S GO DIE



SNOWDOGS
DEEP CUTS, FAST REMEDIES



VARIOUS ARTISTS
PUNCH DRUNK V



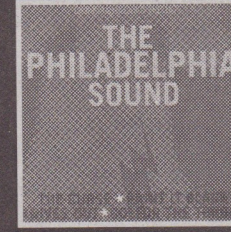
PULLEY
MATTERS



THE FRANCHISE
ORIGINAL INEVITABLE



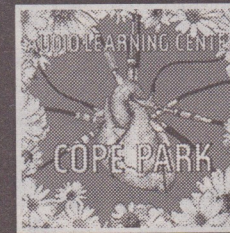
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SECURITY



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE PHILADELPHIA SOUND



VARIOUS ARTISTS
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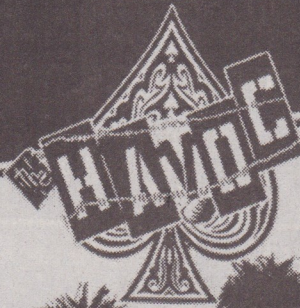
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THE BRIEFS



Interview and Photography By Courtney Riot

It's the classical, modern day reincarnation of the 1970's pogo dancing up-start! Though there is a hint of comedy, that is somewhere lost between the passion and heart driven by The Briefs! They'll put you through a crash course of politically concentrated lyrics, chord progressions so fast and so poppy you'll lose your state of mind, and mend together the 70's and 80's music scene, banning the gap and creating a joint force of music insanity for today's generation! They're the triumphant sunglasses wearing, quirky quad on BYO's roster. When will these boys stop? NEVER! Lance, bassist for the Briefs, talks a little about the life of being an infamous rock-star...you know how they do!

Please state your name and role in the Briefs.

I'm Lance. I try to play bass

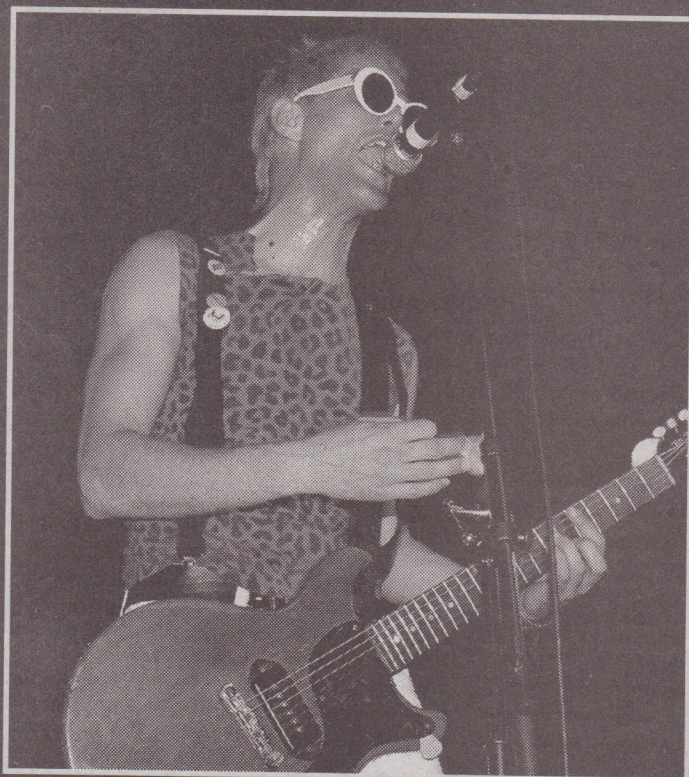
and sing at the same time.

With the screaming angst

of the 70's punk scene and the erratic change of new-wave-esque influ-

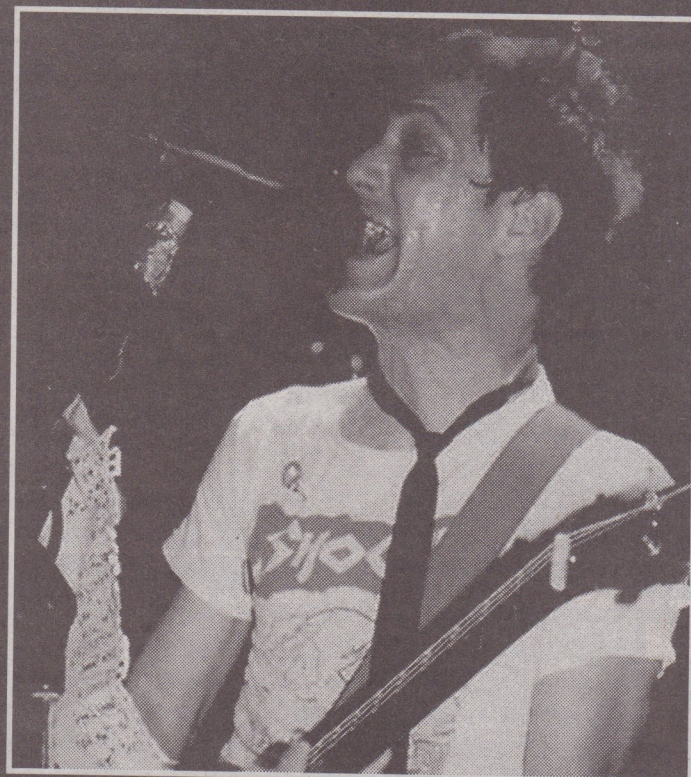
ences flooding the 80's, you guys were there first hand indulging yourself in all of the madness. Now sitting hand in hand, the two forms of music are, and never were, rivals in a world of Music's more or less just a missing ingredient to make that unmistakable sound of the Briefs! What would you say are the driving influences from each generation that add to the band today?

Wow, an actual question with thought behind it! Well, the pressure's on! We are definitely influenced by both of



these scenes you speak of, so of course the music we play is going to have similarities. Hopefully it's not too obvious that we just rip it off completely, but who cares! It was great back then and still is today. To answer your question, for me, I love the weird, late 70's art/new wave punk (like) Killing Joke, Wire, Tubeway Army,

early Adam Ant, Ultravox, Suburban Lawns, as well as all the great So Cal punk (such as) Social D, Adolescents, The Crowd, Simpletones. We also remember what it was like to go to punk shows where the bands put on a show...after all this is just entertainment. We try to put everything we can



into it. We probably spend more time on our outfits than our songs. It makes it more interesting! (Laughs) I also like to eat a whole bunch of ice cream before I go on stage, so I have a huge brain freeze to the point where I experience partial blindness!

It has been said you have

a "Buzzcocks fixation". That's a complete compliment in my eyes! Do you see yourselves as prime examples of first hand introducing new crowds and new people to a style of music that was popular before most of them were born?
I don't know about prime



"...being in a band for a long period of time is like taking a business course at a junior college with a teacher who can't speak English...I never realized that playing on stage would take up about 10% of our time. The rest is dealing with all the day to day shit to keep the band together. We're getting ready to retake our finals since we all flunked the first time around."

examples. There are a ton of bands today that are direct products of listening to the Buzzcocks. If we're in that group, great! And if we can get some kid to discover The Buzzcocks after seeing us, then mission accomplished. It's better than buying the latest "new punk" shit or some lame emo band.

Your latest release on BYO, *Sex Objects*, is amazing! How long did it take to record the album? Any interesting stories during the recording process?

Thanks! It took a couple of

weeks, I think. We spent a month in the practice room writing and another week mixing/mastering after we recorded. It all seemed to go by really fast. Well interesting stories...we all played naked and blindfolded!

What intentions did you have while going into writing this album?

Originally it was going to be a concept album. A total of two 15-minute songs, but our producer (Johnny Sangster) decided to break those up into many songs. I still think two songs would have been much better, but I never get

my way. Damn them!

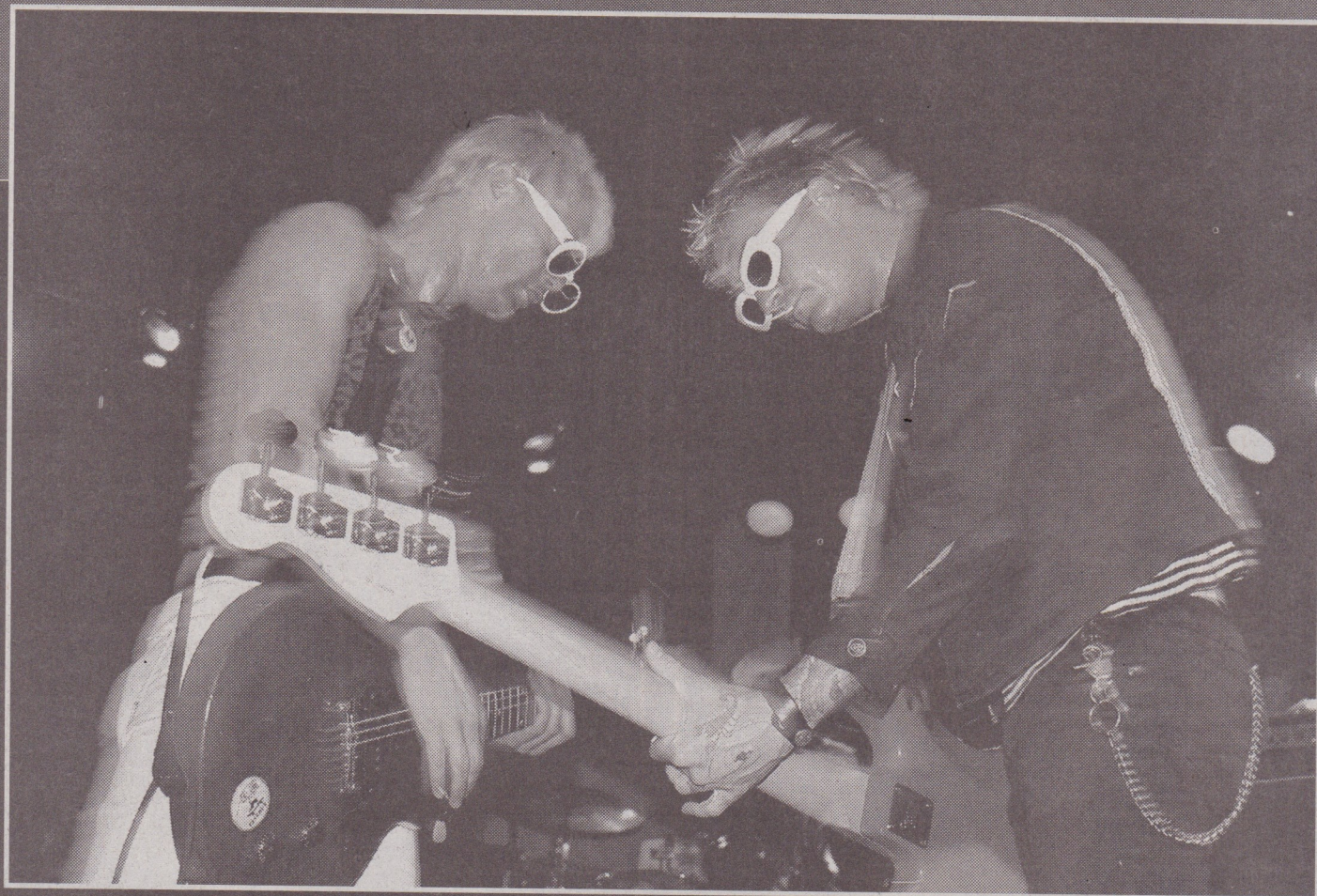
What has been one of the biggest challenges you've had to overcome from your first release to the point you are at now with *SEX OBJECTS*?

Getting our parents to up our allowance and letting us stay out past bedtime on show nights! That and realizing that being in a band for a long period of time is like taking a business course at a junior college with a teacher who can't speak English. (Laughs) I never realized that playing on stage would take up about 10% of our time. The rest is

dealing with all the day to day shit to keep the band together. We're getting ready to retake our finals since we all flunked the first time around. The good part has been getting to tour everywhere and having the opportunity to play with some of our childhood heroes...ala The Damned, Rezzillos, TSOL, and The (fucking) Weirdos! I don't think any of us had any idea that we would be so lucky.

***SEX OBJECTS*, eh? Is there any hidden meaning behind the name?**

It's Latin! It means "don't be afraid". Or you can just listen



to it backwards and then the truth shall be revealed. Hopefully you won't see us on court TV or become the next subject of some documentary on devil worshipping music.

Ring a ding ding. A lot of kids ask about the phone numbers that are inside the liner notes from SEX OBJECTS. Who will pick up on the other end? A dating network, a psychic hotline, or your mom's house?

Let your fingers do the walking and you will find out....

Dance, Dance, Dance! It isn't until you guys get on the stage, that the crowd starts really moving. That brings me to the energy of the band. It's honestly unlike any other I've seen in recent bands an off the wall frenzy, with an adrenaline rush all night long. What's the key to making that a success? Or is it hard work and the true personalities of yourselves breaking loose?

Crack has helped our live shows tremendously. The downside is that we seem a little more on edge lately, weird. It's important to have a good time and give the people there money's worth, even if there are only five of them.

I know you guys are into skating (boarding), after all you guys have a fucking deck made for you! Is your board essential while on tour or do you find yourself skating more in the off time?

I like to ice skate but it's not too cool and kind of hard to do on tour.

What's the best street to skate? Why?

The 405 in LA, because it puts us in a whole different class of skaters. And we look cool doing it!

Do you find yourself liking to open or headline shows?

Really depends on the show. I don't think we would ever headline over The Weirdos, or TSOL, that would never hap-

pen. I like to end shows with my puppet show. Seems to go over really well.

I was standing listening to you guys talk (Pomona, CA) about going back home after three months on the road. I know that has to be pretty hard. Like a majority of bands there's always that side job to get rent money, cheap whores, or moonshine. any job worth mentioning?

There seems to be enough people looking for part time help. Usually it's other punks who run some painting company or dog walking business. I tried that (dog walking) once but the little fuckers shit and puked all over my car so returned them back to their owners with a bag of burning shit on their doorstep.

The 2004 Presidential election is right around the corner. Democratic, Republican, or wherever your beliefs lie, we all know the political state of

our country could improve well, uh greatly. What are your feelings and who do you think will suit our country best?

Shit is that what all the hoopla's about? I have to get my green card so I can vote. Sorry! (Laughs) Well its obvious that something has to change. I really think that we need our first brothers in office and who better? That's right! The Sterns. Shawn and Mark would cut through the crap and make sure everybody on the payroll would be cool and there would be no skimping on promotion.

What can we expect from the Briefs in the near future? Another video, more shows, world domination?

Hot air ballooning and everything that you said!

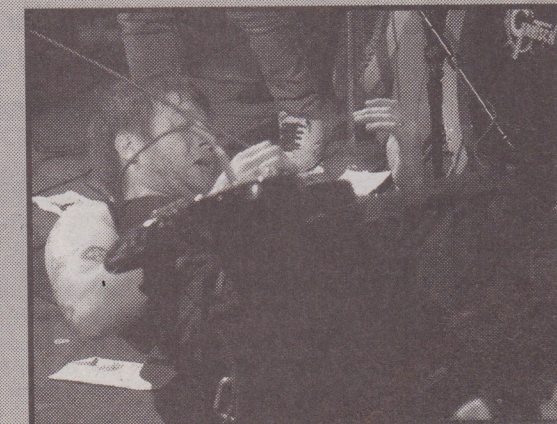
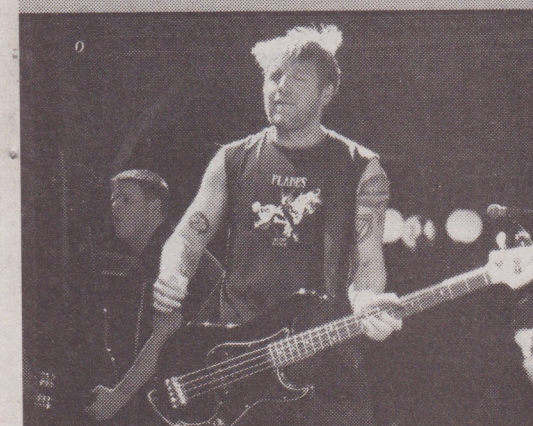
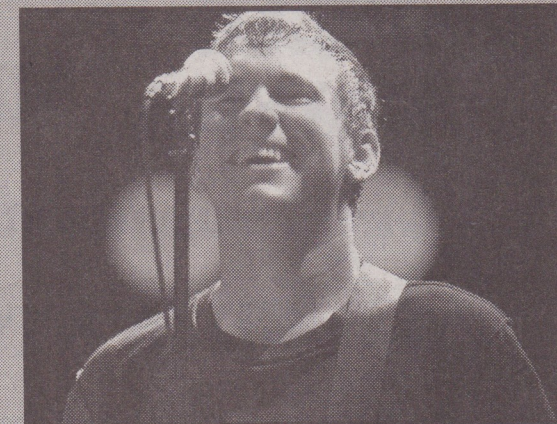
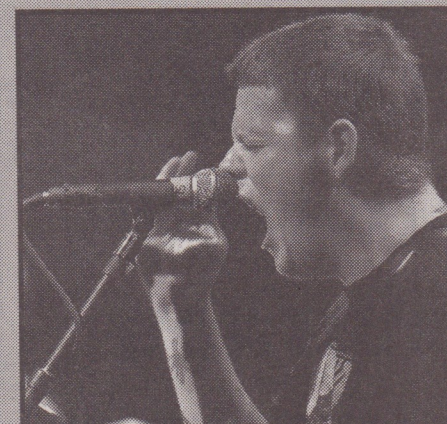
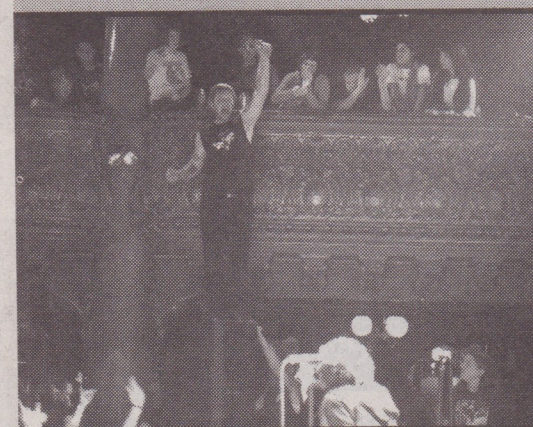
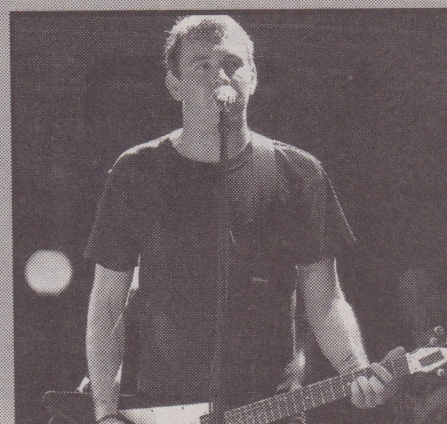
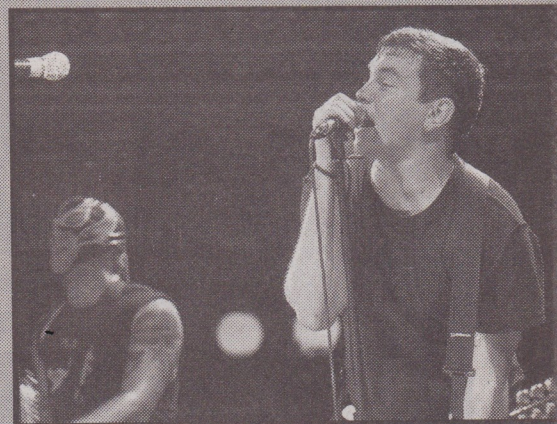
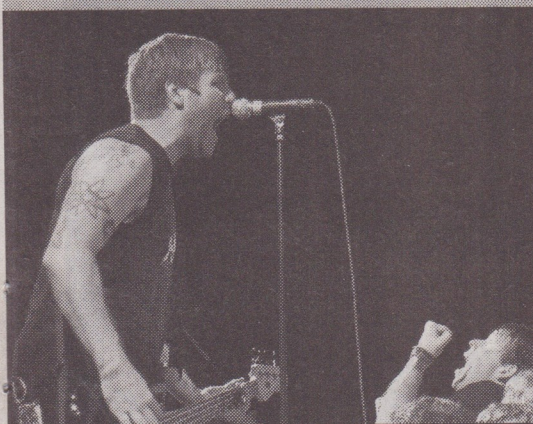
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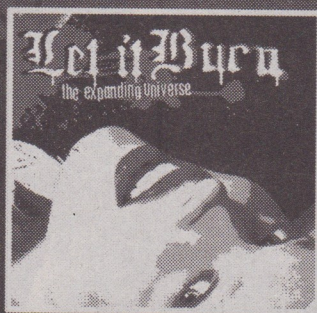


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ACTION ACTION

TWICE THE ACTION FOR MARK THOMAS KLUEPFEL



By Don Sill

Singer/songwriter, Mark Thomas Kluepfel, had an artistic vision yet felt pigeonholed within a certain genre that left him empty and dissatisfied. So, instead of being distraught over the break up of his pop/rock band, The Reunion Show, he viewed the ending as an opportunity towards a new beginning. Despite the success of The Reunion Show's debut album on Victory Records, "Kill Your Television", Kluepfel had evolved beyond the "sugary pop" sound and sought a more personal refuge for his music. Inspired by such '80s new wave bands like Echo and the Bunnymen, U2 and Joy Division he was compelled to do something deeper, more serious with a retro new wave sound. Quite a leap from the upbeat, pop market ambiance of "Kill Your Television."

Kluepfel would hook up with Adam Manning and Clarke Foley [Count The Stars] along with drummer Dan Leo and *Action Action* was born. Kluepfel and his mates soon rejoined Victory Records and with producer, William Wittman [Cyndi Lauper] began work on "Don't Cut Your Fabric To This Years Fashion," an album Kluepfel describes as "way more personal."

Part new wave, part indy rock, "Don't Cut Your Fabric" is a synth driven album that is

cleverly crafted and laced with intimate tracks that finally allow Kluepfel to release his artistic vision.

AMP caught up with Kluepfel while *Action Action* were on the road in Pennsylvania.

How is life on the road so far?

Oh man, that so funny, we were just talking about how all of our girlfriends wanna break up with us. [Laughs] Naaa, It's cool, you know. I like being on tour.

How long have you been away?

Only about a week or so.

And already your girlfriends are ready to bail?

Yeah, pretty much. [Laughs]

What is the biggest difference between *Action Action* and *The Reunion Show*?

Well, clearly one was a little bit of sugary pop and *Action Action* is more organic and real. The *Reunion Show* was just a bit moderately contrived and I always wanted to make an album of just raw emotion, just something that shows what I am. I really love making music and this was the album I really wanted to make.

So, you're much more fulfilled now as an artist?

Oh yeah, yeah. From my point of view it's like "Kill Your Television" and "Don't Cut Your Fabric" are so...look I love them both but this new record is just my life, you know? It's a part of me.

You've moved on as an artist. Evolved from the pop.

"Record stores can be strange at times because it's not like a full rock performance. We're not playing with drums or anything like that. We're playing right next to a Mandy Moore poster and it's weird."

Yeah, yeah, completely.

What would you say was the inspiration for "Don't Cut Your Fabric...?"

I'm not really sure...a lot of these songs were written a couple of years ago and I just kind of held on to them. Musically, I'd say it's kinda like Echo and The Bunnymen, they were a huge influence, and Joy Division. Lyrically, I'd say it was just all the crap that's been building up in my life and I had no other outlet to let it go. I just went years back in my journal and pulled things up that I liked.

That's cool, man. To go back to your journal and recapture a mood is pretty cool.

Yeah, it's weird because there were actually certain passages that when I wrote it I thought I'd never read it again...

And years later those passages inspire a whole song.

Yeah, more or less.

No idea is a bad idea, always write it down.

[Laughs] That's true. It's kinda cool.

Aside from your personal history, there is some vintage rock n' roll history on this album as well. You managed to get hold of Pete Townsend's [The Who] distortion pedal [Univox Super Fuzz] and use it on this album. Cool stuff.

It was the pedal that Townsend used on the "Live At Leeds" album.

How'd you get that anyway? At an auction or something?

Our producer [William Wittman] was in some warehouse and brought it up to his friends and was like, "what pedal did he use?" it was like some kind of a big secret, you know. Everyone was always trying to figure out what equipment [Townsend] used and didn't use. So, he figured he'd ask and the guy was like, "you mean this piece of crap," and he had it right there and the guy just gave it to him.

Damn, that's huge.

I found out later that we're actually not supposed to have it, [Laughs] but whatever.

Now, in a way you pay homage to Townsend on this record.

Yeah, it was actually my favorite pedal to use. It was just insane.

So now you guys are out on the road. How have the crowds been responding to you guys?

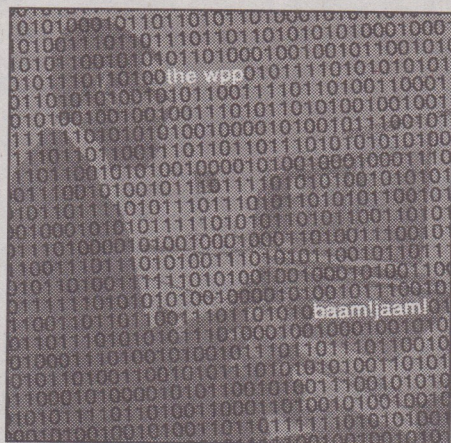
What we're doing right now is just playing acoustic at a bunch of record stores. Record stores can be strange at times because it's not like a full rock performance. We're not playing with drums or anything like that. We're playing right next to a Mandy Moore poster and it's weird. But, it's been going good. We're gonna be out supporting this record until about Christmas time and make as many fans as possible.

What are the odds that you guys still have your girlfriends after this tour is over?

Ahh, let's see...I'm not sure. I can't answer that one. [Laughs] That's a rough question.

www.action-action.com

THE WPP



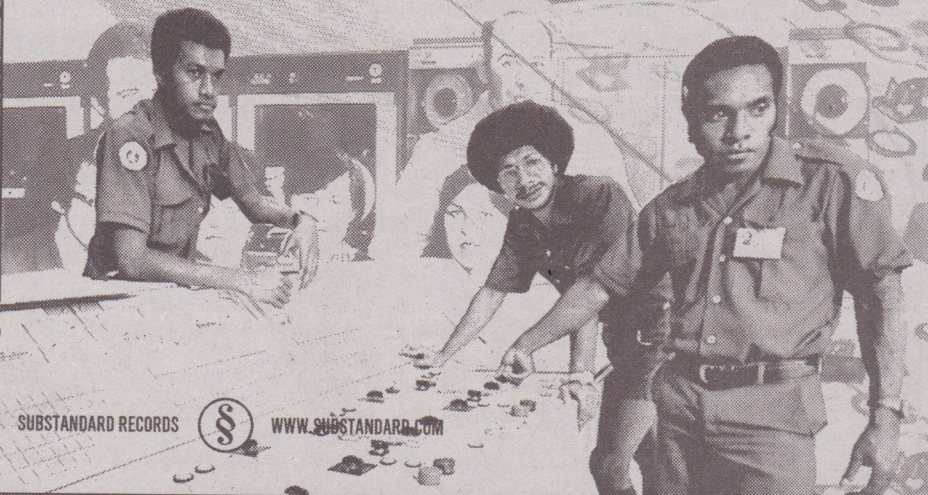
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GUEST COLUMN: FAT MIKE

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Thanks to the millions of young voters who waited in lines to make their voice heard. According to THE CIRCLE (not the early reports of the Associated Press) young voters did show up in mass. 4.6 million more 18-29 year olds voted than in 2000.

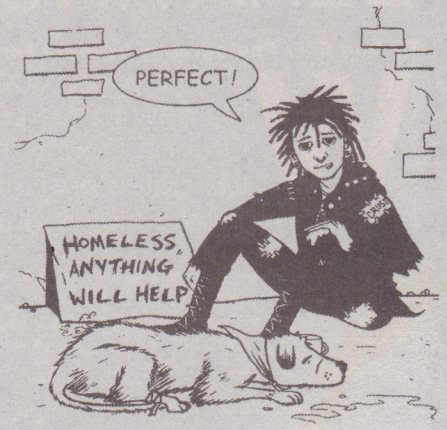
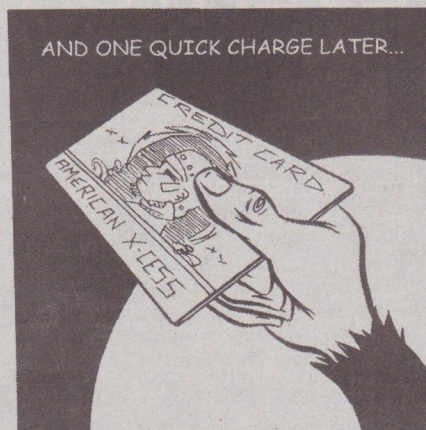
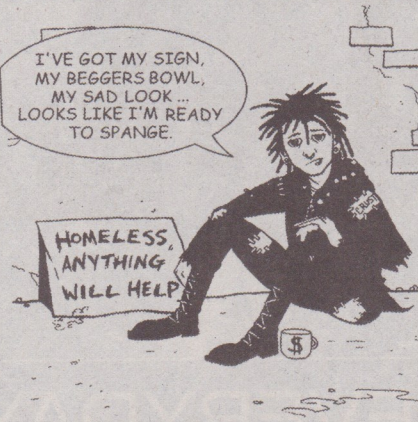
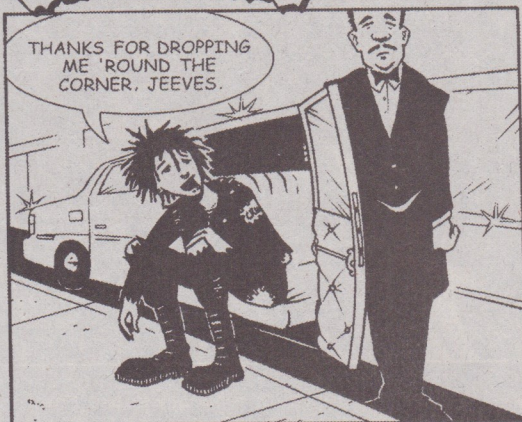
Youth turnout was up 9 percentage points. However, fear-stricken homophobic turnout was also up by an amazing amount. Nonetheless, we are proud of the tens of thousands of punks who took to the streets to make their opinions known. (America clearly saw your efforts, your DIY signs and posters, the concerts that you held, the thousands of you that volunteered, and the overall energy that was created.) While there were millions of voter-registration efforts out there, with your help we were able to accomplish something very different. We were able to disseminate information on how all these issues truly affect young voters. We worked to make sure young people got this information even if the politicians never talked directly to our nation's youth. We provided you with credible sources and facts to educate your friends and family members. It was great to hear about how many of you shared the documentaries from the Rock Against Bush CD's and used the reasons to Rock Against Bush on your own websites and zines as well. We succeeded in engaging hundreds of thousands of voters with real reasons why Bush truly sucks.

We are honored to have had the amount of support from the entire

community. Huge thanks go out to the hundreds of bands that helped this effort, the dozens of record labels that supported the cause, over 600,000 of you that bought Rock Against Bush Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, the thousands of you that made your own flyers, signs, websites, t-shirts, etc. And to the millions of you that visit this website to help us achieve over 500,000 unique visitors a month! (over 20,000,000 hits a month) All of these efforts helped us communicate our message to millions of voters.

We gave it our best shot. Senator Kerry today said that now we need to come together and heal as a nation. FUCK THAT. There's no fucking way I am going to come together with these homophobic, flag-waving, god-fearing, gun-toting, uneducated, isolationist, ethnocentric REDNECKS. We live in a country that's in a shroud of ignorance. We do not compromise or come together with them. We fight them and everything they stand for. We as a community have to take care of each other and respect each other because apparently our current government has no interest in that. They do not care about gay people, they do not care about sick people, they do not care about black people, they do not care about poor people, they do not care about the rest of the world, they do not care about our environment, and they especially don't care about a woman's right to choose. We may have lost the battle, shit we may have lost the war...but we are not losing our minds. WE ARE RIGHT...THEY ARE WRONG...just because we seem to be the minority doesn't mean we come together with them. We continue to fight...and drink...and try to have a good fucking time. That's my plan anyway; thank you all.

PS: The party at my house was great on election night. It did turn out to be an all nighter after all. They can fuck up our country, but they can't fuck up my party. ☛

Scenesters
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MELEE



BEHAVING EVERYDAY

By Don Sill / Photography by Piper Ferguson

With five years under their belts Melee are not terribly new to the punk scene but these days the Orange County band have finally broken out of the gates and into the mainstream with a brand new album and a slot on the Vans Warped Tour.

With solid live performances as well as a hit single, "The War", Melee have been winning over a fan base from coast to coast and are sure to become major players within the music scene.

Melee's vocalist, Chris Cron and his mates- Rick Sanberg, Ryan Malloy and Michael Nader- have been earning a national buzz with a sound that meshes pop hooks with piano based rhythms that

engage a gentle, emotionally soaked rock ambiance that takes Queen and Billy Joel and mixes them with Something Corporate and Maroon 5

Their Hopeless/Sub City debut "Everyday Behavior" takes a crisp clean approach at teenaged angst with a calming, pondering effect that brings the coming of age memoir to a whole new playing field that is as alluring to poppers as much as it is to punk cliques.

Chris Cron spoke with AMP while on the road driving from Virginia Beach to Washington D.C. in between Warped dates.

How have the kids been responding to you?

They've been responding real well. I



mean, the kids that we get to watch us. [Laughs] There's like ten thousand people there and we have to find the people who'd most likely like our stuff. I don't know. It's been good. We've had shows where there were five people there and shows with hundreds watching us. Most of the time it's pretty good.

So people are digging you?

Yeah, everyone likes us. I'd say 75 percent of people who watch us buy CD's.

How's the female situation going?

[Laughs] it's good, you know. I mean, a lot of us have girlfriends, so we try to stay away. I mean, there's a lot of pretty girls on the road and we actually have a lot of flashing experiences. [Laughs] Not that we're trying to do that, it just sort of happens.

You're living out the dream, man. You're on tour, girls flashing themselves...Does it get any better?

It's amazing. We're all about the music and all about the fans. This has been a great experience so far. Just being able to travel and gain fans has been great.

You're album, "Everyday Behavior," this is a solid album. You really mix a collage of sounds and styles on this...

...That's what we do. Even our name came from that. Melee means like a "big fight" or

a "big brawl" or a "free for all" so we decided to take that on as a musical "free for all." We put a lot of styles into our sound even if they don't always fit at times.

It works out great. Every song has it's own identity.

Thanks! That's what we wanted to do.

What song would you say best defines Melee?

I don't know...I'd have to say...shoot...that depends. See our direction changes all the time so sometimes certain songs may define us one day and then other songs may define us another day. I never know which direction we're gonna go in. But to give you an answer, I'd say that "Meztizos Love Song" or "Perfect Mess," one of those two, best describe what Melee is about right now.

On the song "The Curse" you say that "only the rich die young" what did you mean by that?

What I meant by that...Well, the whole song has to do with money and power being a curse. But "only the rich die young" doesn't literally mean that wealthy people die before poor people, most of the time that's actually not the case. But, what it means is that money can suck people souls out, you know. It has the power to take over someone and kill their spirit. You know what I mean?

Yeah, money corrupts people and their spirit dies young?

Yeah, it's corrupts them and they rot from within.


Now, here you guys are. You have an album out, you're out on the Warped Tour, you're earning a fan base. At this point, what has been the most rewarding achievement?

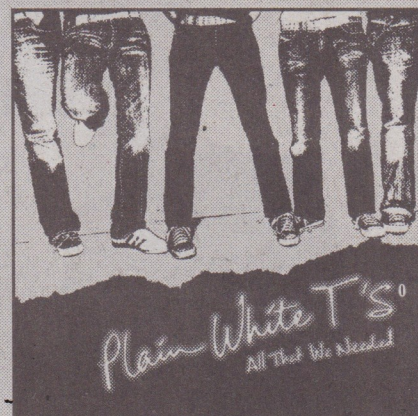
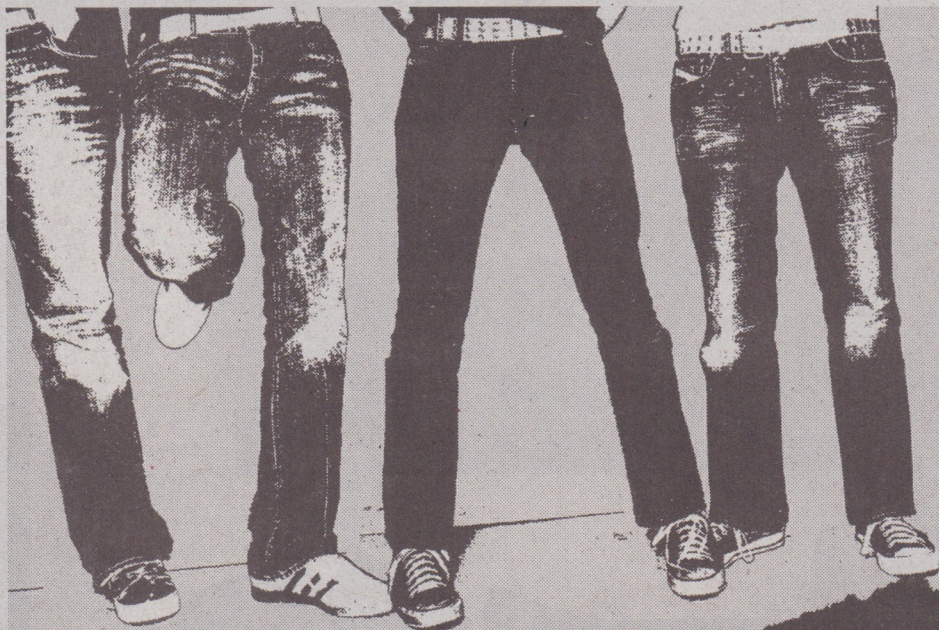
I guess I'd have to say just knowing that we're surviving it all.

[Laughs] It's been awesome just getting up everyday and seeing all these great things, getting through a hard days work and knowing at the end of the day that we did good. That's what it's all about. We deserve everything we've been getting, you know, because we work hard at it. The whole thing has been rewarding. Just being able to get out on the road and do what we've always wanted to do.

What's next?

We just want to keep touring in support of this record and see how far it goes. We'd like to get our song on the radio and let things take off from that. Who knows, we just want to take this as far as we can. That's been our main goal since we started this band five years ago. We just keep going and keep going and things keep gradually getting bigger.

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KANE HODDER

By Janelle Jones

Upon learning that he'd just woken up right before my phone call, I feared Kane Hodder frontman/lyricist Andrew Moore wouldn't be functional. My mistake — turns out he was totally "with it" and had much to say about his band's records — the EP *A Frank Exploration of Voyeurism and Violence* (re-released earlier this year) and their debut full-length *The Pleasure to Remain So Heartless* (both on Cowboy Versus Sailor/Suburban Home), horrific injuries incurred while onstage, and the *true* demeanor behind the band itself, which also includes guitarists Eric Christianson and Jeremy White, bassist Nick Cates, and drummer Charley Potter. According to Andrew, the band REALLY began once Charley, Kane Hodder's third drummer, came on board in October 2002 (the band had been together for six months prior to Charley joining up) when "it kinda all clicked" and finally became apparent what the guys wanted to do musically, which was basically to create cerebral, dynamic, fun, inventive, and, most of all, eclectic music by incorporating elements of a bevy of genres including indie, hardcore, punk, and post-hardcore, to name a few, into one swirling, sometimes-chaotic, oft-affecting mix.

I saw something that said the actual Kane Hodder [plays none other than Jason Vorhees in some of the Friday the 13th films] is a fan. Is that true?

Yes. It's true. When we were first starting we e-mailed him (we got his e-mail off his website), and we said, "Hey, can we use your name?" and blah, blah, blah. He e-mailed back and said it was cool,

and then about a year-and-a-half later, he got a hold of us 'cause he'd been finding all sorts of Websites and reviews about us online and he was interested, downloaded some stuff, and really liked it. He ended up getting our guitar player's phone number and calling him and just talked to him for about an hour, just about everything, and [said], "Yeah, if you come down to L.A., we'll hang out

and you can stay at my house," so he's a big fan. We sent him t-shirts and a couple CDs and he said he'd do what he can to promote us and all sorts of stuff like that.

So how'd you come up with the moniker anyway?

Well, me and our guitar player, Eric, were trying to come up with names and it'd been a couple months we were practicing and we didn't have a name. We were kinda thinking one night, "Oh, it'd be awesome if we named our band Kane Hodder," but we didn't think anyone else in the band would go for it, so we never brought it up. We were fans of the *Friday the 13th* movies and we thought it'd be kinda funny if we were named after him, and we thought it was a really cool name even without the reference; we just thought it sounded really cool. And then we brought it up casually at practice and everyone liked it, so we stuck with it... All the song titles are movie references and stuff like that, so it kinda goes along with the whole theme.

What's the creative process like for you guys?

At first it was mostly me showing up with full songs and them adding their personalities to it, but lately, like for the new record, it was mostly me

coming with like two or three ideas, and us as a group kinda fleshing it out, adding parts and taking out parts, so the process has become very collaborative and that's really, really helped because all five personalities get to really show in that way 'cause everyone comes from a different background. So it really helps where if one person can't see where the song is going, maybe another person will and stuff like that. Sometimes it's really frustrating; sometimes it'll take a month to write a song, and sometimes it all clicks and we write a song in two practices, but it's very collaborative. **So, basically that's the reason for like it's really an eclectic sound. You have a lot of different elements in there.**

Yeah, 'cause we all listen to such different types of music, so when we're on tour we're all angry at each other 'cause no one wants to listen to the other person's music. Of course there's some levels that we agree on, but everyone has their own style and it really helps when we're writing. It makes for a very interesting result.

I haven't heard the EP, but in your view, how would you say it differs from the full-length?

One of the main differences is that the EP doesn't really capture the live energy as well as the record does. It's got a lot of energy, but it's not as spontaneous-sounding as the record is, and I think the songs on it are good, [but] they're not as natural-sounding as the ones on the full-length. We were still looking at how to go about what we wanted to do as far as utilizing different genres and different styles. So some of the changes on the EP seem not as stylistically natural as some of the full-length songs, so that's about the only difference. And Charley had only been in the band for a month, so we were still getting used to him and we'd only been a band for six months; so we were still getting used to each other. When it came time to record the full-length, we were totally on the same page, we knew how to play with each other and how to play off of each other. It's basically a lot more natural. The whole flow of the record is a lot more natural than the EP was.

So with this record you feel you've accomplished everything you set out to?

Probably not everything, but we're on our way there. Right now it's probably the 100% best we can do, the pinnacle of what we're building up to. [Laughs] I'm hoping when it comes time to do the next record it'll be another step up, it'll be that we've grown and been able to go about things in a whole new way, but right now, it's definitely something we're all really, really proud of and we all put 100% into it. We were there everyday working our hardest, and the engineer/producer, he just really put forth the effort into it and put his heart and soul into it, and pushed us to do our best, so we're really proud of it.

Can you go over some of the topics touched upon in your lyrics?

The last three songs on the CD are like a concept trilogy and they're all about racism, war, intolerance, and just my feelings on that. When we first started, movies were just as much of an influence on me as music, so I thought it would be cool to

add that element into it, so all the song titles are references to movies and the lyrics kinda use movies as metaphors or extended metaphors, if you will, about what I'm trying to write about. So in no way are the lyrics about the movies, they're about what I'm feeling, it's just using movies to get that across. We have one song on the record, "You Sign Your Crimes with a Silver Bullet" about this co-worker of mine who was being abused by her husband and kinda us watching it happen and her not letting us do anything about it. And I'm the only straight-edge member of the band, but there's a couple songs about my feelings about being a drug-free member of a band that isn't a straight-edge band. A lot of the songs are just evaluations of human lives, just songs about people putting themselves in bad situations, kind of analyzing why some people are putting themselves in bad situations. And just the elitism in some of the music scene, the obvious focus on fashion in music scenes, and just all sorts of stuff. It's really just evaluations of everyday life in things that I see, and trying to come to a realization about what's going on, basically.

You mentioned the song titles. Do you enjoy coming up with them?

It's always really fun for me to try and come up with a title that is gonna, in my opinion, encompass what is being said in the song and also have it be a really cool – like maybe someone'll be like, "Oh, wow, that's from this movie," so it's really fun for me to come up with something. The rest of the guys are always like, "What's this one gonna be called?" and I tell them and they laugh. [Laughs] 'Cause a lot of times they know what movie I'm coming from. But it's really fun for me 'cause I did a lot of film stuff in school, and movies have always been a very big influence on me, so I like to incorporate that as much as I can.

What would you like people to know about Kane Hodder – the band, not the man?

[Laughs] I'd like people to know we are five very different people. We are not very cool I guess you'd say. We are very laid-back, just very fun, very geeky, very dorky people. And onstage we try to give our all. I really like it when people come up to us who know us as the shy people that we are – we're very, very shy, all five of us and once we get to know people we open up, but at first we're very quiet, very shy, we're all very reserved, but onstage we just give our all. We play to the point of exhaustion. We've been known to hurt each other onstage – not on purpose, of course! We're just going as crazy as we possibly can and sometimes people collide or get a guitar to the head. I've gotten three concussions.

Wait, are you kidding?

No, I'm not. I got three concussions; Jeremy split my head open with his guitar. People who don't know us see us onstage and probably think we're just crazy, crazy people, but we're not. We are very, very shy, very reserved, and people who come up to us afterwards and they talk to us, they're like, "Wow, you guys aren't as crazy as you are up there." It's kind of a Dr. Jeckyl/Mr. Hyde type of thing, where when we're onstage we

get to let loose and have fun and try to make other people have fun, but off-stage, we're content to just sit down and enjoy the other bands. We're not a big party band. We don't stay out really late partying and all that stuff. We're more content to just sit down and read, watch movies, and have quiet evenings with each other. [Laughs] We do that quite often where all five of us get together and watch a movie or watch TV, play video games. Yeah, I guess the main thing would be for people to know we're really shy.

So, okay, shy and reserved, now to be onstage, was that hard at the beginning?

When I first started playing in bands, I was 12 years old, so I got rid of my stage fright a really long time ago – I can't speak for anyone else. Sometimes we'll be playing a show and all the sudden for some reason I'll just get nervous beforehand, like the anticipation to play and it's like, "Oh, weird!" and then when we get out there it completely goes away. We have three rules for playing, which is: play every show like it's your last, don't be afraid of looking stupid, and don't be afraid of getting hurt. We use that 'cause if you're nervous people can see that, so we just try and get up there and be as natural as possible and have as much fun as we possibly can so it can radiate out into the audience. We lead people in hand claps and try and get people to sing along, and I usually will go out into the crowd and mingle and dance with people. We try to make it fun for everybody – not just for ourselves.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

Actually, we try and make it a point when we do interviews to talk about how our songs don't have verse-chorus-verse on purpose because when the EP came out we got a lot of reviews like, "What the hell? These guys don't know how to write a song." We've all been in other bands and we know how to write a verse-chorus-verse song but we're trying to get away from that. The verse-chorus-verse formula, we just can't do that. It's not what we wanna do; we wanna try and bridge the gap between genres, and to do verse-chorus-verse, it wouldn't be an adequate formula for what we wanna try and do. So it seemed only natural to do through-compositions for all the songs – no repeating parts. Instead of like on the radio, a song will have one hook and it's repeated over and over and over... We wanna try and write five or six hooks and just play them in a row with each other instead of just coming up with one hook and then building around it, kinda maybe writing a lot of hooks and writing around those. So with the new record, we try to make it a point that there's no verse-chorus-verse on purpose – not that we don't know how to write a song. And we're not the only band doing this; there are a lot of bands doing this and I think pretty soon it's gonna be a viable means of writing a song. I think pretty soon people are gonna start seeing more and more of it 'cause there's a lot of bands tired of writing in the verse-chorus-verse format. Not that it's a bad format, we're not trying to put it down, we're just trying to maybe find a different way of going about doing things...

www.hodderrock.com **K**

RAPID FIRE

SHORT
INTERVIEWS
FOR SHORT
ATTENTION
SPANS

PROFILE: THE MANSFIELDS

By Pee wee

NAME:

Dave Mansfield

POSITION IN THE BAND:

Bass/Singer

HOMETOWN:

Colorado Springs, CO

THE MANSFIELDS SOUND LIKE:

If you can imagine blending up The Ramones, Runaways, Motley Crue, Generation X, Social Distortion, The Cramps and on and on.... Basically everything we've been moved by since the beginning of Rock N Roll.

OUR LABEL (BLAST OFF RECORDS) IS COOL BECAUSE:

They give us the money and freedom to do our thing the way we want to do it.

FOUR CD'S THAT ARE INFLUENCING ME THE MOST RIGHT NOW:

Influencing and inspiring... The Sounds - self titled, Motley Crue - Shout at the Devil, Faster Pussycat - self titled, Hanoi Rocks - Bangkok Shocks, Saigon Shakes, Hanoi Rocks.

BEST THING TO DO IN THE VAN IS:

Watch DVD's. We always have Ford Fairlane, Airheads, Beavis and Buttthead, My So Called Life, and about a thousand others on every trip.

WORST DRIVING INCIDENT INVOLVED:

We were driving home from LA on one of our first tours and I fell asleep at the wheel driving us off the road in the middle of the Utah mountains. Luckily for me and everyone in the van, we happen to go off the road in the middle of a clearing into a field. Guitars and cases were flying all over the place and landing on our heads. It was stupid and terrifying and we walked away with only a hole punched through our oil filter.

COLORADO SPRINGS HAS INFLUENCED OUR MUSIC IN THE SENSE THAT:

Well, we're not like anything Colorado Springs has ever seen. With so many Indie and Emo bands flourishing in Colorado Springs, The Mansfields have had to survive outside the support system of all that. Luckily, there are enough kids into it that The Mansfields have been able to draw 500+ kids to our shows.

THE KIDS THESE DAYS ARE:

Actually dressing cool again...Who woulda thunk they were all about the Rock N Roll.

IS KOBE INNOCENT?

Probably not, but good luck finding him guilty.

SOCIAL D OR THE RUNAWAYS?

Social D... Check out their new live DVD! Ness still rocks



the house. No disrespect to Joan and Lita we love them as well.

SOUTH PARK OR FAMILY GUY?

Family Guy...even though we are from Colorado, we still have to go with Family Guy.

BEST RAMONES RECORD.

Take the first four Ramones records, Toss em up in the air, and the first one to hit the ground wins! They're all brilliant.

UPCOMING TOURS OR RELEASES:

We've filmed a live DVD Concert on with 5 Cameras and are just wrapping on a video for "All Dressed Up." Then we are gearing up for our Third European tour. We are still knee deep in promoting the "Loud, Fast, Punk, Trash, Rock N Roll" CD. We always have very current info on our web site about tours and shows.

WHEN WE'RE NOT ON TOUR WE EARN OUR LIVING BY:

Playing shows (even if just locally) selling CD's and Merch and working as little as possible. It's hard making a living off your music alone but it can happen...just sometimes not quick enough and it can and will destroy mere mortals.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SHOWS:

Giving the kids something they probably haven't seen live. We play fairly traditional old school Punk Rock N Roll stuff but put it together with tons of lights, Fog, Backdrops etc. It sometimes sounds cheesy to some people but we'll leave the boring live shit to the ones who do that well...Music first, theatrics second but we haven't forgotten... it's called a "SHOW" for a reason.

BAND THAT STILL GIVES ME THE CHILLS WHEN I SEE THEM LIVE:

Wow...so many. But so many are dead and gone sadly. Social Distortion, Motley Crue, The Sounds, Brian Setzer...off the top of my head. I LOVE a good Rock N Roll Show!!

WEB INFO:

www.MansfieldsUsa.com

Death From Below

Metal/Hardcore News, Reviews & Interviews By Kirby Urrest

>Headlines

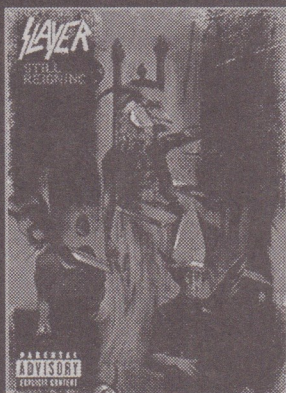
> For years, artists have looked to create exciting and innovative stage designs for their fans - thrash/punk/metal gods SLAYER will push that concept right over the edge this fall with an effect dubbed the "Wall of Blood." Slayer's Wall of Blood will make its North American debut when the band head-

lines the Jagermeister Music Tour, set to kick off

October 29 in Springfield, MO.

At select shows (determined by each venue's technical specs) during Slayer's classic song

"Raining Blood," the band, their instruments, and the stage will be drenched by a downpour of "blood." The "Wall of Blood" will rain more than 150 litres of theatrical blood over an area measuring from 32-feet to 40-feet wide (determined by the size of the venue's stage), 25-feet high, and six-feet deep. The device is a dedicated truss and sprinkler system that utilizes a unique pump technology, and was designed exclusively for Slayer by UK-based Hangman Productions. Slayer used the "raining blood" effect last July in Augusta, ME while filming their brand-new DVD, "Still Reigning." The Dean Karr-directed DVD opens with the band's 1986, 28-minute benchmark album "Reign In Blood" performed live in its entirety by Slayer's original line-up - Tom Araya (vocals, bass), guitarists Kerry King and Jeff Hanneman, and drummer Dave Lombardo, who permanently rejoined the band in 2003. "Still Reigning" also offers bonus material including live performances of Slayer classics such as "War Ensemble," "Hallowed Point," "Necrophobic," "Mandatory Suicide," "Spill The Blood," "Hell Awaits," and "South of Heaven," as well as exclusive interviews and backstage footage. "Still Reigning" has a running time of more than 80-minutes and a con-



firmed November 2, 2004 release date. SLAYER was named the "Best Live Band Ever" in Revolver magazine, and "Best Band" in that magazine's 2004 Readers' Poll. In addition, Slayer's video, "Bloodline," was just named "#1 Best Metal Video of the New Millennium (So Far)" by viewers of MTV2's "Headbangers Ball" and readers of Revolver. Slayer's "Wall of Blood" will be in effect at as many venues on the Fall Jagermeister Music Tour as possible; the confirmed "bloodbath" cities/venues will be announced shortly.

> Al Jorgensen of Ministry is responsible for the headlining soundtrack to Activision's highly anticipated PC game Vampire: The Masquerade - Bloodlines. Inspired by the dark, menacing undertones of the game, Ministry's track, "Bloodlines," is one of several popular songs that can be heard in the game, which takes fans into the sinister vampire underground society of modern day L.A. The complete lineup of songs for the game includes:

Aerial - "Pound"
Chiasm - "Isolated"
Daniel Ash - "Come Alive"
Darling Violetta - "Smaller God"
Die My Darling - "Needles Eye"
Genitorturers - "Lecher Bitch"
Lacuna Coil - "Swamped"
Ministry - "Bloodlines"
Tiamat - "Cain"

In Vampire: The Masquerade - Bloodlines, the famous White Wolf role-playing game world extends into an all-new interactive adventure, combining the rich character development and immersive storyline expected in a true RPG with the up-close-and-personal first-person immersion and action provided by SourceTM, the latest engine technology developed by Valve. Currently in development by Troika Games for the PC, Vampire: The Masquerade - Bloodlines is yet to be rated and is expected to release this Autumn.

> Vocalist Vince Matthews has been dismissed from the Dying Fetus lineup. According to the band, "This action was taken due to a number of musical, professional, and personal reasons that we feel do not need elaboration at this time." However, the group goes on to state that "Vince

remains a long-time friend of several Dying Fetus members and we wish him the best of luck in the future." The move will apparently not affect the band's current tour plans, as they intend to continue as a four-piece, handling the vocals "accordingly."



> Pennsylvania's A Life Once Lost have officially joined the Ferret Music roster. Formed in 1998, the group has previously released material with Loudnet, Robotic Empire, and, most recently, Deathwish Inc. ALOL recently began writing material for their next full-length, titled "Hunter." The effort will be recorded in January at Trax East studios in New Jersey with Eric Rachel (Every Time I Die, God Forbid) producing. Paul Ramano (Mastodon) will handle the layout. Look for the record to hit stores in spring 2005. Additionally, Ferret and Deathwish will re-release the group's latest full-length, "A Great Artist," in 2005 with additional artwork by Jacob Bannon.

> The following dates for the upcoming Darkest Hour and Between the Buried and Me tour have been confirmed:

12/02 Vancouver, BC @ Mesa Luna
12/03 Seattle, WA @ Graceland



> Dillinger Escape Plan guitarist Brian Benoit recently suffered an arm injury, rendering him incapable of performing during the tour the group

just embarked upon with Every Time I Die, Zao, and Misery Signals. Details surrounding the injury haven't been officially disclosed, though reports suggest a pinched nerve. Regardless, Benoit could possibly require surgery and will likely be out of commission for several weeks. Filling in on the tour is band friend, James.

> Italian "pagan metal" band Elvenking have issued a statement confirming that they have been rejoined by singer Damagoras. Damagoras left the band in August 2002 due to "health reasons" and was replaced by Kleid. Commented Elvenking: "After the long wait, we can officially confirm Damagoras' return in the band. The singer who left Elvenking two years ago has joined his fellows back in order to recreate the original heathen spirit and essence that bound every single member to each other. The band, after the release of their last album 'Wyrd' (recorded with a different singer, Kleid) entered a difficult period due to various reasons related to the musical direction to take, personal relations, business affairs, etc. Put in front of this situation, there was no choice for ELVENKING to keep on expressing themselves still being faithful to what the band was born for. Now that the original line-up is still together, things are going great and the songwriting process for the third album has been nearly completed! "After the release of 'Wyrd' the contract between Elvenking and AFM Records was about to end, but following the amazing results both for sales and critics of the two albums, we're happy to announce that the band and AFM will keep on working together also for the next one!" The follow-up to 2001's "Heathenreel", "Wyrd" was recorded in three different studios, including the Gernhart facility in Siegburg, Germany and was mixed in December at House Of Music in Stuttgart, Germany with producer Achim Kohler (Primal Fear, Brainstorm). The cover artwork was painted by pagan artist Duncan Storr, who has previously worked with Skyclad and Rage, among others.

> Swedish black/death metallers The Legion are busy writing songs for the follow-up to last year's debut album, "Unseen to Creation". "Seven tracks are completed so far and the new material will for sure surpass anything we've ever done before," the band write on their web site. "We are planning to start the recording of this as-yet-untitled album sometime early next year." The Legion's debut album, "Unseen To Creation", was released last October through France's Listenable Records. The CD, which was recorded at Abyss Studios with producer Tommy Tägtgren, features "ten songs of complex and eclectic black/death metal, ranging in style from Morbid Angel to Setherial." The cover art was done by Kris Verwimp, who has previously

worked with Marduk, Absu, and Immortal, among others.

> Metal Blade Records has recently signed on to handle distribution for Blackmarket Activities, Guy Kozowyk from The Red Chord's label, and Iron Clad Recordings, Trevor Phipps from Unearth's label. This means that fans that have been having a hard time locating releases from either of these labels will now be able to find them in all the stores that Metal Blade Records and its distributor Red works with. Both labels will be re-releasing certain CD's, some which will have revamped packaging and bonus material. For more information on what the re-releases will contain you can check any of the labels' or bands' websites.

"We are very excited to welcome both Blackmarket Activities and Iron Clad to the Metal Blade family. We will be distributing releases for each of the labels and are excited to work with their great artists." - Brian Slagel Owner/CEO Metal Blade Records



> Cattle Decapitation's latest album, "Humanure," has won the "Best Hard Rock Album" of 2004 in the San Diego Music Awards. Last year, the band's album "To Serve Man" won in the same category. Vocalist Travis Ryan said "The band thanks the City Beat Staff and our friend Gabe Serbian for accepting the award for us."

> Long-running German thrashers Kreator will be teaming up with Sweden's Dark Tranquillity for the "Enemy of God Tour 2005" beginning in February 2005. Two as-yet-announced opening acts will be added to the bill. Confirmed dates are as follows:

- Feb. 02 - Salzburg (A) Rockhouse
- Feb. 03 - Zagreb (HR) Tvornica
- Feb. 04 - Budapest (HU) Petöfi Hall
- Feb. 05 - Wien (A) Planet Music
- Feb. 06 - Graz (A) Orpheum
- Feb. 07 - Ljubljana (SLO) VtK
- Feb. 08 - Treviso (I) New Age
- Feb. 09 - Mailand (I) Rolling Stone
- Feb. 10 - Montpellier (F) Rockstore

- Feb. 11 - Bergara (E) Jam
- Feb. 12 - Madrid (E) Arena
- Feb. 13 - Barcelona (E) Razzmatazz 1
- Feb. 14 - Lyon (F) Transbordeur
- Feb. 15 - Paris (F) Elysee Montmatre
- Feb. 16 - London (GB) Electric Ballroom
- Feb. 17 - Antwerpen (B) Hof ter Lo
- Feb. 18 - Tilburg (NL) O13
- Feb. 19 - Osnabrück (D) Dutehalle/Georgsmarinenhütte
- Feb. 20 - Oberhausen (D) T-Club Turbinenhalle
- Feb. 21 - Langen (D) Stadthalle
- Feb. 23 - Stuttgart (D) Longhorn
- Feb. 24 - Nürnberg (D) Hirsch
- Feb. 25 - Pratteln (CH) Z7
- Feb. 26 - Kaufbeuren (D) Zeppelinhalle
- Feb. 27 - Glauchau (D) Alte Spinnerei
- Feb. 28 - Berlin (D) Columbiacub
- Mar. 01 - Hannover (D) Faust
- Mar. 02 - Hamburg (D) Markthalle
- Mar. 03 - Göteborg (S) Musikens Hus
- Mar. 04 - Oslo (NO) Betong
- Mar. 05 - Stockholm (S) Klubben

As previously reported, Kreator have set "Enemy of God" as the title of their new album, due in Europe and South America on January 10 and North America on January 11 via SPV Records. A limited-edition version of the CD will come with a bonus DVD containing a "making of" documentary and video clips. Artwork duties will be handled by Austrian artist Jochim Luetke (www.luetke.com). Arch Enemy guitarist Michael Amott makes a guest appearance on lead guitar on the track "Murder Fantasies". The follow-up to 2001's "Violent Revolution" was recorded and mixed at Backstage Studios in Derbyshire, England with producer Andy Sneap (Machine Head, Skinlab, Nevermore), and was previously described by Kreator mainman Mille Petrozza as "pure brutal thrash! Tons of fast shit, sick solos, aggro riffing... I am really psyched about the new shit. Can't wait to hear what [the fans] think about it..."

> Following the tragic death of WINDIR frontman Terje "Valfar" Bakken who died of hypothermia on January 17th, 2004 in Reppastolen, Norway, the rest of the band decided to move onto other projects. The memorial concert for both Valfar and Windir occurred at the Rockefeller in Oslo, Norway on September 3rd. Vried (Norwegian word for wrath) is one of the new projects that has been formed which features three ex-Windir members - bassist Hváll, drummer Steingrim, vocalist/guitarist Sture Dingsøyr (vocals/guitar) - and new guitarist Ese. Ese has been a close friend of the Vreid members for years, and he was co-engineer on Windir's Likferd album from 2003. More information will surface soon regarding

a release date and label for Vreid's debut.

> Sinai Beach recently finished tracking their new full-length. Entitled "Immersed:" the effort was recorded at Trax East studios and is currently being mixed. The album will hit stores on January 5th through Facedown Records.

> INTO ETERNITY with Amorphis and Beyond the Embrace

- 03/02 The Mason Jar - Phoenix, AZ
- 03/03 Key Club - Los Angeles, CA
- 03/04 Galaxy Theatre - Santa Ana, CA
- 03/07 Studio Seven - Seattle, WA
- 03/09 Bluebird Theater- Denver, CO
- 03/10 Ranch Bowl - Omaha, NE
- 03/11 Pop's - Saugei, IL
- 03/12 Ascot Room - Minneapolis, MN
- 03/14 House Of Blues - Cleveland, OH
- 03/15 Club Rockit - Toronto, ON
- 03/16 Cafe Campus - Montreal, QC
- 03/18 The Loft - Poughkeepsie, NY
- 03/19 Palladium - Worcester, MA
- 03/20 B.B. King's - New York, NY



- 03/21 Trocadero - Philadelphia, PA
- 03/22 Rex Theater - Pittsburgh, PA
- 03/23 Thunderdome - Baltimore, MD
- 03/24 Jaxx - Springfield, VA
- 03/25 Masquerade - Atlanta, GA
- 03/26 Masquerade - Tampa, FL

CORRECTION: In last month's regional and national issues, there was a typographical omission in the Set Your Goals interview. Here is the missing portion:

Let's get down to business. Funniest and/or most disgusting thing you've seen in a porno flick?

Matt: Funniest thing I've ever seen... Probably this porn I was watching called Lady In Italy... oh wait no, I got a better one, let me start over. We were watching this one at my friends house called "Pump My Hot Ass." (everyone busts out laughing)

That's a keeper.
(more laughter) ☛

> Record / DVD Reviews

Lamb Of God - Ashes of the Wake

Epic Records

Major labels and extreme music have not gelled well over the last decade plus. The Earache/Columbia Records disaster is a monumental event of note, or despite the claims of "can't fail" sales, Cradle of Filth were ceremonially dropped from Sony within a year of their first release in the big leagues. Still, you have to admire the suits who are willing to take a chance on the brutal, genre bending, non commercial acts out there, even if it occurs with dollar sign filled eyes. "The New Wave Of American Heavy Metal" is catchphrase candy to execs worldwide, and is being used to market the merging of classic thrash metal and mid 90's hardcore as an antidote to the excess of nu-metal and a dangerous nemesis to synthesized, saccharin popular music. How exactly a technical, thrashy band oozing with chugga chugga breakdowns from Richmond, VA who formerly had the moniker of Burn The Priest, became "the next big thing" requires nothing more than a thorough listen to "Ashes Of The Wake." LOG combine the mosh friendliness of Hatebreed, Morbid Angel like precision, massive Megadeth styled leads (former guitarist Chris Poland even guests here), and a distinct Slayer attitude into an unstoppable doomsday device that will have the scene reveling in it's apocalyptic glory and unparalleled atomic punch. It all comes together perfectly here; from the neck snapping opener "Laid To Rest," a groove filled bourbon fueled shot of bombast with "Now You've Got Something To Die For," straight through to the pure circle mayhem in "Blood Of The Scribe." Drummer Chris Adler slashes the skins with Gein-esque passion and Dahmer type destruction; his work is both primal and refined and absolutely amazing. His brother, guitarist Willie, and the other half of the six-string assault, Mark Morton, are one of the new great duos in metal history. Their blend of ear splitting solos, melodic fills, creative time signatures and boundless energy spills into every blood-soaked note. John Campbell hammers out bass lines from the dark below, drenched in soul and far from buried amidst the other instruments. With his unmistakable vocals, intelligent and insightful lyrics, and no holds barred presence, Randall Blythe continues to hold ground in the battle for best frontman in metal today. The roar of lions leaps forth when his mouth opens, commanding, intriguing, and damn hard, if not impossible to ignore. Views on society, war, religion, and a myriad of other important issues are addressed here, and as usual, are worth a read. While you are checking out the lyrics, take a moment to admire the intense layout from K3N Adams. Very memorable work, which could also be said of the recording courtesy of Machine. His production skills fit perfectly with the band, delivering a top-notch end product that highlights both the harmonic highs of LOG, as well as their devilish depths. This is 101 proof hellbent Southern Hospitality that will hogtie your hands into a permanent state of raised horns...



It Dies Today - The Caitiff Choir

Trustkill Records

Though they've been given the now standard issue Trustkill touch up (pretty boy glamour, a near overdose of mandatory melodic parts, etc.) It Dies Today still pack the punch that appeared on their Life Sentence Records release. The girls may swoon over this, but IDT are going to have them running scared at shows when the breakdowns of biblical proportions come out of the woodwork and onto the dancefloor to bring the pain to cum-dumpsters who stand in the way of the almighty mosh. Clean singing has been kicked up quite a bit (which are damn good compared to most bands trying to pull it off), but what makes this a quality release is the dedication IDT has to the old days of Trustkill and Ferret. There are numerous instances within "The Caitiff Choir" that conjure comparisons to highly underrated groups like Disembodied, For The Love Of, Torn Apart, Harvest and Despair. Just take a listen to the chunky ending of "My Promise," the bareknuckle brute force in "The Depravity Waltz," and "Revelations," a technical thunderstorm, loaded with double bass devastation. The more radio friendly offerings like "A Threnody for Modern Romance" and "Marigold" are not half bad, but don't get me going as much as the previously listed tracks. My real hope for this band is that they don't abandon the old school metalcore influence to become an Atreyu or 18v clone. If they are able to maintain the balance presented here, IDT have the potential to restore some of the respect this subgenre so desperately needs...



Wintersun - self-titled

Nuclear Blast Records

Most bands have the reputation for starting a record off with A material, and Wintersun are no exception. Though it would be a great folly to assume that the following tracks lessen in stature and impact as the disc wears on; very much the opposite effect occurs. Wintersun take things into maximum overdrive with the two-punch knockout of "Beyond the Dark Sun" and "Winter Madness" but the thrill ride doesn't end with the conclusion of the second track. Each succeeding song contains the same stellar grade riffs, flawless drumming, gorgeous synth melodies and black metal rasps, with the addition of well-defined acoustic passages and mammoth electronic driven entries. Extremely talented multinstrumentalist Jari Maenpää, who is well known for his Ensiferum work, combines neoclassical grace and speed, traditional heavy metal aggression, folk flavored hooks and Norse nuances into a concentrated laser beam that has a shine like the Northern Lights, calling to all metalheads to their dark, enchanted forest, a wonderland of wicked treasures. A superb recording, stunning artwork, and strong material make this debut a reason for great celebration...



Evergrey - The Inner Circle

SPV/Inside Out

Swedish faves Evergrey continue to lay claim to a high throne within the metal kingdom by releasing yet another incredible release of powerful, dark, melodic progressive metal.

Reminiscent of pioneers like Queensryche, Dream Theater, Fates Warning and Warrior Soul, the band is far from the usual definitions of "heavy." The vocals are nowhere near Cookie Monster territory, soul-searching ballads appear here and there, and overall, Evergrey could

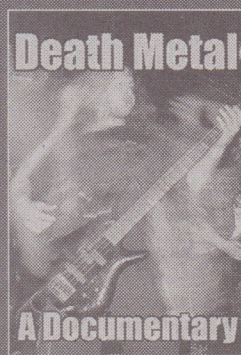
incite both caveman mosh and crowd surfing at shows with the material presented here and on previous efforts. Yet, despite the overwhelming arena atmosphere, a cramped club heart beats, when the sweat soaked, downtuned riffs snap like beasts in the midst of a feeding frenzy, amidst fast and frantic drum rhythms. These anger fueled outbursts are tempered by operatic background vox, popcentric undertones and keyboard/synth lines worthy of a Hollywood epic, making "The Inner Circle" appealing to a vast array of metal fans. The tale woven within the ten cuts on "The Inner Circle" speaks on the relationship between humanity and our struggles with faith. Between samples of in your face evangelism, dramatic bits of holy catharsis, and the soaring angelic pipes of Tom Englund, the music relates common themes of frustration, hopelessness and desperate cries for salvation. The feeling really hits home with tracks like "Ambassador," "In The Wake Of The Weary," "More Than Ever," and "Where All Good Sleep" will have you singing the praises of Evergrey in no time even if you do not all the answers you seek. I don't know if any band is really up to such a monumental challenge, but Evergrey is quite adept at giving listeners a little piece of heaven, catapulted into eardrums with the fires of hell. Fitting artwork, crystal clear recording, and a nice break from the standard metal/hardcore output...



Death Metal: A Documentary DVD

Music Video Distributors

Grimoire Of Exalted Deeds head honcho Bill Zebub is the mastermind responsible for this documentary. Though bare bones in presentation, with little to no editing, this is probably the best window into the world of death metal that you are going to find. Not as though there is exactly an abundance of A&E produced pieces on the subject, but Zebub provides an adequate summation through interviews, live performances, and rare video clips. As the camera rolls, it is stated that there will be no narrator; merely the creators, practitioners and perfectors would tell the story. Members of Mortician, Cannibal Corpse, God Dethroned, Immolation and more provide their views on past/present/future of Death Metal, record labels, file sharing/music downloads, horror film influences, the technical aspects of their craft and retaliation against the naysayers. Peter Steele waxes philosophical about his time in Carnivore and hardcore matinees @ CBGB's in the early to mid 80's helped shape that bands direction, Malignancy talk about the fans they have within the medical community, and Immolation break down the business of death metal for everyone. Many other topics are discussed, most of which is very interesting, candid and thought provoking. Of course, you still get plenty of headbanging time in with seldom seen videos from Hemorrhage, Deranged, Necrophagia and Brutal Truth, as well as live performances courtesy of Rain Fell Within, Carcass, Suffocation, and Amon Amarth. Total running time is around an hour and a half, so you definitely get plenty of good stuff. As I said earlier, this is definitely amateur in actual filming, but completely professional in content. Not to say it's off piss poor quality, but this is real deal death metal, raw and uncut. If you are looking for an introduction to this metal institute, "Death Metal: A Documentary" is a great start.



Hellfest Vol. III DVD

Trustkill Records/High Roller Studios

High Roller Studios always puts together excellent DVD's, and that fact rings most true with their Hellfest collections, including the latest installment, "Vol. III." 2+ hours of footage shot with 6 different camera angles, mixed in SRS Circle Surround Sound 5.1, featuring nearly forty bands, plus interviews, gag reels, and more. While I am not particularly pleased with what Hellfest has become over the years in terms of integrity, you can't argue that there have been some killer line ups. 2003 has it's weak spots

(CKY, Autopilot Off, The AKA's, and My Chemical Romance) but there are plenty of highlights to cover the losses. The Red Chord, Terror, Uneath, Walls Of Jericho, Lamb Of God, Until The End, No Warning, Death Threat, Bleeding Through, Figure Four, Stretch Armstrong, The Dillinger Escape Plan, Champion, Full Blown Chaos, and With Honor are prime examples of why metal and hardcore rule. The crowd footage is insane, and the multiple vantage points expressed really make you feel like you are there. The gag reels are pretty funny, and the layout/packaging is nice, though as always I would have preferred a booklet with lots of pics, personal stories, etc. Doug Spangenberg is truly gifted in this art form, and the help/hard work from such famous faces as Anderson Bradshaw (Another Victim, The Promise), Jonathan Buske (The Promise, Ragmen), Guav SxE Weapon, Dave Anthem (Prayer For Cleansing), Derrick Van Wie (One King Down, The Promise) comes through. Particularly notable moments include Keith from ETID making a stage diver a target for audience catcalls due to poor timing, DEP's fire breathing extras, the absolutely horrid vocals on the Norma Jean (why did they ever hire this guy?), Big E trying to come up with interview questions with hilarious results, the incredibly high quota of xPosi Chrisx stagedives, and of course, the kings of NorCal, First Blood laying waste to the New York State Fairgrounds. All in all, a worthwhile buy for attendees (with 6 camera angles, you're bound to see yourself somewhere) and fans who missed out...



Carpathian Forest - "We're Going To Hollywood For This" DVD

Music Video Distributors/Season of Mist Records

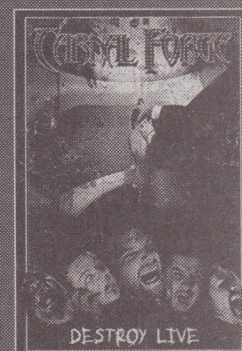
Can't say I have ever been Carpathian Forest's number one fan, but this DVD furthered my appreciation of their work, with its unholy alliance of thrash, black and death metal. "We're Going To Hollywood For This" is comprised of a full length, slick performance within the confines of a TV studio in Krakow. The sound and picture are golden, as the band covers material from different points in their extensive career. Many bonuses are abound as well including audio bootlegs, rare live performances, video clips, and a CF appearance from Wacken Open Air 2003. Also included are a photo gallery, desktop images, a band biography from frontman Nattfrost and a well done animated menu. For fans of CF, this DVD defines the term "jam packed." Even if you don't declare supreme allegiance to CF, you will receive a significant return on your investment.



Carnal Forge - "Destroy Live" DVD

Music Video Distributors/Century Media Records

Hot on the heels of their latest ferocious release "Aren't You Dead Yet?" Carnal Forge continue to obliterate everything in their way, and from the madness comes this intense DVD. Containing a complete live show shot in Poland, their set from the Metal Gods Tour 2003 in New York, and footage from the Extreme Bleeding Japan Tour, also in 2003. You get a nice mix here; as each show is very different in terms of presentation. Poland is your standard concert hall environment, while Japan and New York are "anything goes...run for your life" straight from the club pit explosions, dripping in bloody mayhem. Further features include a band biography (that also profiles each member), an interview, photo and art galleries, desktop images and a complete, detailed discography. Don't be left out in the cold on these thrash metal titans; get this and discover Carnal Forge in all their headbanging, neck snapping, speed barrier busting glory... ☛



An Interview With Bleeding Through



As Bleeding Through are about to embark on the 3rd annual Headbangers Ball tour, I caught up with bassist Ryan Wombacher to discuss the tour, their new DVD, bowling, Fashioncore, stealing golf carts, "Bringing The Thunder," Vision Street Wear, and the van accident that made them Inside Edition superstars.

The Headbangers Ball tour is about to commence. How stoked are you?

Pretty stoked. I used to watch the show when I was a little kid, and I'm glad it's back, and really excited that I actually get to be a part of it. It's definitely something I never thought would happen for me. We got our friends Himsa on this tour, and Cradle Of Filth.

BT recently released a DVD "This Is Live, This Is Murderous" on Kung Fu Films, which I must say is one of the best I've seen yet. Are you guys pleased with the way it looks/sounds?

Oh yeah. We had Joe from Kung Fu/Vandals do it. I watched the Vandals' one and I was into it, but I wasn't sure what he was going to do since we were one of the first hardcore/metal bands he'd done. We got to see some of the footage when we were doing overdubs and commentary and we thought it was really cool. When the final copy came out, we were really psyched on it...

The commentary (on the DVD) is so great. Has Phil Anselmo heard Brandon's impression of him yet? So classic. I need it on my answering machine too.

I don't think so. It's probably a good idea that he doesn't hear it. (laughs)

(laughs) Probably not. So how long have you been "Bringing The Thunder" and what amount of time do you spend practicing it?

(laughs) I never, ever practice it. I think the whole

"standing in front of the mirror and practicing your moves" is pretty cheesy.

Yeah dude, that's just for the mosh.

(laughs) Well, it pretty much comes from the mosh, from being a hardcore kid and dancing at shows. All the shit I do, like the flips, just comes from playing and seeing what I can do, like if I can I complete the move. So it's basically a challenge to see if I can fall on my ass in front of everyone and make a fool of myself. Though I usually end up completing them.

So now that you are on tour together again, is Derek from Himsa going to be coaching from the side of the stage?

(laughs) When we on tour with them, we were just fucking around and he was like "Dude, you got to name that thing" and I'm like "what?" and a week went by, he comes up to me and is all "Dude, I got it: bringing the thunder." Every since then, it's been kind of fun and lame to name them.

I'm all about Bleeding Through because Bleeding Through is all about bowling. First and foremost, who is the best in the band, high scores and when is there going to be hardcore/metal bowling championship on ESPN2?

Brandon is by far the best bowler. His average is usually around 200. I'm probably, from the whole band, second to last. (laughs) I'm not too consistent. Martyr AD, who we are on tour with right now, are big bowlers, since whenever we are hanging out, we go bowling. I totally think someone should set up the hardcore bowling organization, and they should do a major tour, with a huge championship at the end.

What do you on the road to keep sane?

(laughs) Not listen to any hardcore, first and foremost. I don't listen to any form of music that we play when we are on the road. All I do is play bass. I've

got a little practice amp w/headphones set up, and a CD combo with discs I play along too. I've made it my mission to be the best at bass as I can. I'm definitely not into half assing what you do for a living, so I make sure to practice a lot and study musical theory.

I think you are the first band I've known that had their fame tripled by a van accident. When you joined this band, did you think you were going to end up on Inside Edition?

(laughs) I, in no way, shape or form, thought I would ever be on Inside Edition. I mean why would I? Inside Edition is for people who an extraordinary story about their cat getting stuck in a tree.

Or a bodily orifice...

(laughs) Yeah, that's true.

Seriously though. You guys became huge internet/TV stars for almost getting killed...kind of creepy.

Yeah, it's kind of weird. I try not to think too much about it. I suppose that any publicity really is good publicity. We're all fine, so we can look back and joke about it. I remember we were listening to Amon Amarth when we crashed, so when we got our new van, that was the first CD we listened to. Kind of like hopped back on the horse.

Ozzfest must have been quite the excursion. Favorite memories/stories/shows from this summer?

Wow. There is a lot. The tour was so long that it's hard to remember. Definitely one of the best times was stealing golf carts. You go over to the production office, and then you basically shove a pocketknife into the ignition and off you go. So we "borrowed" the golf carts a lot and wreaked havoc on the entire fairgrounds. (laughs)

How did the Vision Street Wear sponsorship come about?

Himsa had one before we did. We always noticed their black shoes with red stripes. We thought they were really cool. We all knew Vision of course, as everyone in the band has some sort of skateboard-ing background in one way or another. We gave Vision a call, and gave them our managers' number. A Vision rep came out to one of our shows, liked what he heard, and we worked out a deal. He just said, "we'll hook you up, as long as you rep it." So we always wear Vision shoes and shirts. We like 'em.

Are you guys planning to do another record in the New Year or are you just going to keep touring for awhile longer?

We're pretty booked for another five months, but the month after we got home from Ozzfest, we wrote four new songs, so we are getting there. As soon as we done with these tours now, we are going to take some more time off, and plan to have a new record out sometime next year.

What do you think of the term "Fashioncore" and Bleeding Through constantly getting tagged with it?

I'm not really down with the word. I think it's just because we've got an image, as shitty as that sounds. Yet, even when we are not on stage, we are wearing black clothes and whatnot. I think the whole "fashioncore" thing came about because some people can't handle not having a name for something so they were like "it's hardcore, and it's kind of fashionable so it's fashioncore." It's just a stupid fucking word.

I know Marta just played keyboards with AFI for a Cure tribute show overseas. Are any other BT members doing record guest spots or something of the like?

I think Brandon is going to be doing a guest spot on the new Ringworm CD, though I can't say for sure. I am not personally doing anything right now, but I

would love to do a guest spot somewhere. I just love to play, so I'm pretty much down for anything.

You guys have always been pretty vocal about the edge. A lot of the crowd you played to on Ozzfest is probably far from down for x'ing up. It's without a doubt an immensely personal choice, but do you hope to bring your fans around to the benefits of straight edge?

Anyone who is open to it, interested in it, then yeah. I personally wish I had known about it a lot earlier, I definitely would have been into it sooner. The kids who are into it will stick around and everyone who isn't just fades away. I mean as long as you are seri-

ous about it that's what matters. Not going "oh I'm going to sell out, and then just "re-edge" next week.

Will there be any more videos from "This Is Love..."?

I don't think so. I think we are pretty much done with doing videos for that record. I think the next album we do should have two videos like "This Is Love..." and keep things consistent, but we'll just have to see what happens.

Worst on stage band accident/illness?

Easy. When we in France, Brandon lost his voice to the point that he couldn't sing four nights straight. These were big shows w/Sick Of It All, a thousand

kids plus. He couldn't tough it out, there was just no one he could do it. So he was out on the sidelines and we were minus a guitar player, since Brian ended up singing. So I guess that falls under the illness category.

Yeah. I guess I was hoping for some kind of electrocution or "I shit my pants on stage" story.

(laughs) Nothing like that. The only bad luck we have is with van accidents.

(laughs) Ain't that the truth. ☿

An Interview With Ludicra

Christy, Laurie and Aesop of Bay Area metal sensation Ludicra fielded questions about their other bands, lyrical content, layout, "grey metal," being the first black metal band on Alternative Tentacles and how exactly Soft Cell's 80's classic "Tainted Love" ended up on their latest record.

If you wouldn't mind giving our readers a history of the band?

Aesop: John and Christy and myself started Ludicra in 1998 with Jessika Christ (of Sangre Amado) on Bass and Vocals. She left to further concentrate on Sangre Amado, and we enlisted Ross and Laurie. Soon after we recorded "Hollow Psalms" which was released on Life is Abuse records in 2002.

Are there any conflicts with Ross being in Impaled and do any of the other Ludicra members have other musical projects?

Aesop: Sometimes it makes scheduling a bit trickier, but he was there first and they are a bit more ambitious than we are, they are a great band. Their new album is amazing! John has Hammers of Misfortune, that is his main focus. They are fantastic as well.

Christy: Ludicra gets put on hold sometimes but we seem to manage ok. I love Impaled and Hammers so much, how could I mind?

The lyrics are nothing short of moving, poignant, thoughtful and eclectic. What do you hope to express with them? Is it merely a venting of personal emotions or a political/social message?

Laurie: Well first of all, thank you for the compliment! I hope to express these lyrics to anyone who feels they needed to hear or read them and possibly felt moved in some way or could relate to it. I hope to express just another way or version of writing depressive subject matter. I guess I wouldn't know how to write lyrics any other way. I usually listen to the music for quite awhile before I have anything written down. It does not come easy for me to write, but I still enjoy trying to do it. For me, it is mostly venting personal emotions but usually also including some doomed message, even if it is often a bit vague and probably never political. I often feel like I am trying to philosophize and dissect when I write lyrics.

You have a very diverse style, one that is difficult to nail down into a single genre. Some comparisons I've heard include Neurosis, Peccatum, Dystopia, Burzum, Enslaved, Enewetak and Dark Throne. Who are you influenced by lyrically/musically?

Aesop: We are fans of all the bands you mention, with the exception of Peccatum, who I think are



horrid, and Enewetak, whom I have never heard of. We also love Bethlehem, Agalloch, Pentagram, The Swans and the Birthday Party, and so many others within and outside the metal genre. John is a fan of the obscure 70's proggy bands, Ross likes crust bands such as His Hero is Gone, Laurie likes the more doom stuff, I listen to more obscure black metal like Furze or Xasthur, Christy likes more soundtrack stuff, I think she has the most eclectic taste of all of us.

Christy: I really do like a lot of soundtrack stuff like Badalemti, Goblin, John Carpenter, and Wendy Carlos. I also love metal. I think I've been heavily influenced from a lot of the bands I was listening to while first starting to play guitar, like: Slayer, Metallica, Death, Iron Maiden, Dio, Priest, Godflesh, Sabbath, and Ozzy, yeah, total rocker. Besides the bands Aesop mentioned, I'm also a huge fan of Macabre, Type O Negative, Diamanda Galas, OTYG and Mr. Bungle.

Laurie: A lot of influences...many singers from bands such as Ulver, Bethlehem, Ved Buends Ende, Dawn are just some of my influences for singing in Ludicra. The band 13 was a big influence. I was always blown away by John Brannon, the vocalist from Negative Approach/the Laughing Hyenas, and of course Wendy-O-Williams from The Plasmatics.

The Bay Area scene has a very rich metal history. Did that help to nourish the bands

creative desires and nurture your growth?

Aesop: Outside of Exodus (R.I.P. Paul), Metallica and Possessed I know not what you mean. Most of those other bands never really moved me that much. It has really nothing to do with us.

Christy: Well, if it wasn't for John starting the Lucifer's Hammer's metal Tuesdays (which is bay area metal history to me), I don't know if Ludicra would have ever formed the way we did.

You are the first black metal band on Alternative Tentacles. Why did you sign with a small, largely punk based label instead of a more metal filled one?

Aesop: It had more to do with being treated fairly than anything else. We also didn't want our record to get lost in a sea of other metal releases. AT works hard for their bands and seems to give them all equal attention. We were not out to be part of some exclusive club; we just wanted to put out our record. Besides, AT has the coolest logo of any label out there.

Ludicra has been called "grey metal," which is often described as black metal that steps outside the often-strict boundaries of the genre, like you do by incorporating doom, thrash, crust and classical elements. Do you like the description of "grey metal" or is something you are trying to get away from?

Christy: I like the description you described as grey metal, I don't like the term though nor us being referred to as such. I even like blackened metal or even, doomy, thrashy, crusty metal better than grey metal.

Aesop: We would like to shake that grey metal nonsense. I'm not sure how it started. I guess because we are not so orthodox in our approach to black metal. I'm sure it we be bandied about in reference to us until someone coins a better term to describe what we do, or until we become a shitty nu-metal band.

Laurie: Wow, I didn't realize to what extent this made-up genre called grey metal would keep popping up. It was an easy way to describe ourselves at the time, and I think Ross came up with it. We do fit that description you wrote regarding grey metal and I'm grateful to hear such a description, but I think there really isn't a term or genre that can cover all those styles combined, right?!

What made you go with the album title "Another Great Love Song?" Simply tongue in cheek, or is it actually serious?

Aesop: A bit of both, actually. John's amp was picking up radio and when we were rehearsing the album it kept calling out "another great love song" between songs. We joked about it being the title, but when it was done, the recording and lyrics and all, it seemed really appropriate. Then the art sort of fell into place.

Christy: I remember Ross and I first discussing

actually calling the album that and we really started liking the idea but we were pretty sure the rest of the band would hate it. It turns out none of us could think of anything we all liked better so it stuck.

The layout is amazing; unlike most of what is out there metal wise. Who came up with the concepts and what party was responsible for the fine cake decoration?

Aesop: Ross and I designed it along with our friend Eric Radey who has an incredible eye for design. The whole thing was done in like two weeks. The cake was a pain in the ass; a friend of mine did it for a six pack.

What have crowd reactions been like?

Aesop: Great. Especially when we play all ages venues like Gilman Street.

Christy: Every show, has been really good, the crowds reactions vary, though. I think a lot of it depends on the venue and whom we're playing with and how drunk people get. At the all ages shows, the crowd's usually playful, energetic and vocal, moshing over all the pretty parts. The last 3 or 4 shows we played were at bars, lots of drunken people banging their heads. That's been great too.

Do you have tour plans solidified for the rest of year and will Ludicra be on the road in 2005?

Aesop: We will be doing some sporadic touring for the album. Ross and John have other musical commitments and I am the father of a 3 year old, so long trips are difficult to plan.

Christy: I'm ready for Ludicra to be on the road, we probably won't do any long tours anytime soon though. We've definitely got the west coast covered the rest of this year and beginning of 2005. I'm really hoping next year we can get out more. I really want to travel with these guys.

Name one book you think everyone should read.

Laurie: Mother Night by K. Vonegut

Aesop: That is a tough one but I am going to have to say "The Redneck Manifesto" by Jim Goad.

Easily one of the simultaneously smartest and most entertaining books I have ever read. I think everyone should read it regardless of race or social standing.

Christy: "100 Years of Solitude" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, then lets see how depressing your life really is.

Last question: What is up with the sound-bite of "Tainted Love" at the end of "Why Conquer?"

Aesop: Oddly enough, "Tainted Love" is playing on the system at the strip club I work at as I type this. Again this was the parasitic oscillation from John's amp. It was playing "Tainted Love" by Soft Cell when we ended the song, we left it. ☞

An Interview With Cradle of Filth



Cradle Of Filth bassist Dave Pybus gives "Death From Below" readers the lowdown on their new record and the meaning of its title, South America, on stage clothing, the proper way to keep a quality road crew, improving fans' vocabulary, and getting a shirt design refused by the pressing plant.

Can you talk a little about the title, "Nymphetamine" and why you chose it?

Dani loves word play... mixing things up a lot and being creative. The title is obviously a mix of two words, Nymph and Amphetamine, which, at first, implies women and drugs. It's fun to have people think the record is solely about these two subjects, because it's never that simple for us. It's a little more contrived than that.

This doesn't seem to be a concept record at all. Was that something you steered clear of this time around?

I wouldn't say we steered away from a concept album. Just, we wanted to try open things up a little and the title seemed to fit with several subjects, usually relationship based. I don't just mean personal stuff for Dani. It's more observant than from a one-person angle. Each song is like an essay on a subject that could be tied with the title.

Artwork has always played a prominent role in Cradle Of Filth. Who did the cover, and how did you get hooked up with them? What has been your favorite piece of art used for COF cover/shirt/etc?

Matt Lombard did the cover and booklet art for this one. He's based in Milwaukee and just showed up at an Ozzfest signing session in 2003 with an envelope full of cool art. We didn't look at it until we got home a few weeks later and immediately got in touch. I like lots of the artwork we have used.

On a similar note, what are your thoughts

on the "Gilded Cunt" shirt being refused by the pressing plant?

I thought it was funny, seeing as the "Jesus is a Cunt" shirt sells so well for us. We have kinda worked things out with them to bring out the shirt ready for the tour. The demand for it has now settled the subject.

Immense kudos for having Doug Bradley return to do (Lead Cenobite or "Pinhead" from the Hellraiser films) spoken word bits on "Nymphetamine." He has such an incredible and powerful voice. Was he someone you had always wanted to work with? Are you a big Clive Barker fan?

I'm personally not a Clive Barker fan. I always loved the HellRaiser soundtracks mind. Doug was cool to meet and work with. We had the idea pretty early on to do a "Ghost in the Fog" Part 2 and it was important to get Doug to do the narration for that, as he did so on the Midian album.

You are about to headline the 3rd Headbangers Ball tour. Originally it was supposed to involve Mudvayne as direct support, and opens Satyricon and Lacuna Coil. This is definitely going to be a huge event. Are you excited about it, and are you disappointed that the above three listed bands were unable to be a part of it?

It's kind of an honour to be headlining shows these days, as there are so many great bands out there. That tour Line-up was something the promoters were knocking about and it never really got off the ground. I have no expectations of tour packages until we actually all get together in the first venue of the tour and see who really is touring with us. Things change every day on that front and hopes of bands we want and like usually never get onto the tour. Arch Enemy are definitely an established metal band, but you also have two up and coming hardcore influenced groups, Bleeding Through and Himsa coming aboard. I'm not really into Arch Enemy but I know they will keep us on our toes playing wise. Himsa are cool and were on my list of 'wanted' bands. Months ago. I saw Bleeding

Through play with us at the New Jersey Metal Fest last year and thought they were a good band. That girl on keys looked nice too haha. I'm pretty open-minded when it comes to other kinds of music.

Do you enjoy the merging of metal and HC or do you prefer the two separated? Do you dig any hardcore bands (past and present)? What other forms of music do you like?

Hardcore is a specialty when it comes to me, Dani and Martin. Grew up on that stuff. It's good to mix up the tour with different bands.

You just finished up a string of dates in South America. How was that experience? Was it your first time in the part of the world? Did you receive the kind of reaction you had hoped for? I know there was some concern about violence against COF from the religious zealots in certain South American countries.

It was an OK experience. I didn't really want to do the trek and came back with an ongoing injury so, maybe put that down to negative karma. The shows were good, great fans. Funny stories too. One show was supposed to have the Police supply a barrier to the venue that meant kids would be safe. The local church told the Cops not to lend us the barrier, so the fans ended up potentially getting hurt. It's that level of hypocrisy that we love in the world. Amazing. Unbelievable, but true.

One thing COF is extremely well known for is your immense stage show. What have you got planned for the Headbangers Ball tour, if you don't mind sharing at least a few details?

We had a production meeting in South America, which kinda changed things for us on the HBB tour. We want to present the new album like it sounds and simplify things a little. Slide projections is something we are looking at. Other stuff is still being planned.

Who designs your on stage outfits and how large is your road crew to accommodate such an extravagant production?

We have a great company in the UK called Sinwear who experiment with us for clothes. They've gone on to produce stage gear for the likes of Judas Priest. Our road crew is standard. 5 - 6 crazy guys willing to do anything for the band. Great people who have my up-most respect and gratitude. I love them like family. Pay them like dogs haha.

To clear up any misconceptions fans and the general extreme music media may have, what happened with Sony? Why did you decide on Roadrunner?

Nothing bad happened I'm afraid to inform you. They had a different plan for us and we wanted to move ahead after Damnation and a Day and write the new record. They wanted us to take 6 months off so they could fire 20,000 people worldwide. Lucky for us we managed to get off and find Roadrunner waiting right there to pick up the work load.

How do you feel this record compares with "Damnation and A Day?"

It's way more digestible. I know, I've eaten many copies of Damnation and suffered from terrible heart burn. Seriously, it's easier to swallow.

It's definitely one of my favorites that you've done. I really like the raw, stripped down nature of it. Is that the result you were hoping for?

Was kind of the intention with Damnation but with Gian (guitarist) leaving and the heavy use of the Orchestra meant we got a little side-tracked. This time we have James on guitar and the drama is less.

COF has such great lyrics, very well composed and intelligent, deeply poetic. Who/what inspires your writing?

Dani usually locks himself away for a few weeks and studies hard to make his lyrics something special. I never really see the subject matter he draws influence from but I did see a few porno mags kicking around his room.

I think what I've always liked about COF lyrics is that they are not overtly repetitive, and require some reading to truly comprehend, and more often than not, just to repeat! Do you like having that dedication with your listeners?

It's impressive to see the fans singing along with all those tongue-tying lyrics. I think it's a good way to promote classic reading too. Parents should be thankful we are introducing their little ones to good material here, not just trash.

What is your take on the growing popularity and mainstream nature of metal?

It's all good. For me it never went away. It's very healthy right now and pretty exciting again.

To say COF has a rabid and devout fan-base would be a massive understatement. What is your relationship like your admirers and followers?

I try to be nice to them... but, they should know. I'm quite shy and don't really care for being grabbed and shouted at by strangers in the street. I'm usually quite unrecognizable before and after a show, which is intentional. Kinda contradicts all the people I used to know who say I'm just in this for the stardom. I never go shopping in my make-up, do I? Nobbers.

How do you guys put out a new record every year? I mean, these albums are huge! It's not like three chord pop punk or something. Is it just a brutal work ethic or a non-stop flow of creative energy that is harnessed more easily than most bands are able to?

It's just a drive we have to try stay one step ahead. The new record just came out this week and we are already heading into early pre-production and writing for next year. There are 6 of us in the band, all with pretty fresh ideas, so it's a lot easier than you think. A few days off would be nice. Though, haha. It's pretty non stop most of the time.

Are you planning to do any videos for tracks from "Nymphetamine?"

Planning on doing 3 videos, one for the title track is out now. The other tracks are yet undecided.

Liv Kristine (formerly of Theatre of Tragedy) guests on the record. How did that collaboration come about and are you pleased with the outcome?

Very pleased with the outcome. It turned out great for both her and us. When we met for the first time at the video shoot for Nymphetamine in London we talked about how the song came about and the effect it's having on our careers. It's great to collaborate with such cool people. They can see beyond the money and the profile and just run on being positive for once. I really liked that about Liv. Very down to earth and humbled. Good luck to the girl and her band. ☺

An Interview With Himsa



Vocalist John Pettibone of Himsa and I talk about metal, the Headbangers Ball tour, AFI, cover, getting free stuff from Revolver, his former bands, and the good old days of Seattle hardcore/metal.

Himsa has definitely had a change in sound over the last five years, going from political post hardcore to gothic thrash metal. Was it a shift that just happened or a slow alteration process?

Thrash, yes. Gothic, no. The progression of the band was already starting to take place when I joined Himsa in 2000. They had lost a guitar player and vocalist earlier that year and the other three continued writing in a pattern that reflects what the sound is today. There are hints of metal in old Himsa which were written by the remaining members so when I joined they had a new set of songs already written. Now that we have Matt and Chad in the band, who both are diehard metalheads, the writing process is a lot more balanced with the two of them and Kirby. They are all influenced by a lot of the same musicians and bands. The "gothic" term is not part of this band, just a part of me. The imagery is dark, the lyrics are depressing at times but a lot of it is rage and anger. I come from the hardcore scene that should tell you enough. With only one original member left, did you ever think about scrapping the band and starting over, new name, etc? No, because the member changes were only made when one left the band. It wasn't an overhaul of the entire line-up. It is hard to find people that want to sacrifice a lot of their own life to do this band in the way we want it to run, to be a full-time band. Too much has been put into the formation of this and we never wanted to give up on it. Now it is starting to pay off thankfully.

I'd have to say that Himsa ranks right up there as the band with the most interesting merch items ever, as well as the greatest spread for fans to choose from at shows. Everything from thongs to candles, to Himsa brand housewares. Do you guys just do it to see what people will buy or did you always wish the bands you liked would have offered license plate holders



and paper weights emblazoned with their name?

We just wanted to be a little more creative and try out items that we as fans would want from a band. It adds to what Himsa is. We love trying to come up with new ideas or even taking ideas from fans. Its just special items and we usually only have them for that tour we are on. My favorite so far has been the candles. Wait to see what comes next kiddies.

John, my introduction to you as a vocalist came about when I was around 13 years old, seeing Undertow at the Redmond Y. I personally have to let you know that Undertow had a huge influence on my life and was the first real hardcore band I was into. Your lyrics and music meant a lot to me then and still do now, as I count "At Both Ends" in my top five albums of all time. With Mandel from Indecision putting out an Undertow discography recently, what are your feelings about the bands legacy ten years later? I've heard you on stage saying you hate the band when people yell Undertow song titles at you. Can't say I blame you for getting sick of that, and or not being appreciated for your current work, but I'm curious to know if you really harbor a major distaste for your former band. If so, why? What about Nineironspitfire? Any comment(s) about them?

Wow, thank you very much. Those Redmond Y shows were insane at that time. I'm very proud of what we did in Undertow. If it weren't for that I wouldn't be doing Himsa today. Some of the greatest memories of my life. At the time of the bands early existence we were the only straight edge hardcore kids in Seattle, plus Dave Excursion and a hand full of our friends. We played punk rock basement shows, VFW halls and slowly started building a scene that never existed here before. Hardcore bands from other states would start coming up to play every month and soon we had 200 to 300 kids in Earth Crisis, Integrity and Unbroken shirts stagediving, kickboxing and singing along. I'm psyched that you were there. So when a kid yells out the band or one of the songs at a Himsa show, deep down I'm flattered but most likely they were not around then and have no idea of what



that band meant. Sometimes it is an old "core" kid and I'll go talk to him/her about "those days, those fuckin days", and 15 years later I'm still that same old straight edge kid. I loved Nineironspitfire too, but it was a reflection of what I was and not of what was around me. Undertow was about the keeping the scene alive, Nineironspitfire was about keeping myself alive during some very bad personal times. It was therapy. THE FLAME STILL BURNS.

You guys had the opportunity to open up for AFI. Did the crowd like you and has your fanbase grown because of those appearances?

We went over very well on those shows and we did get alot of kids returning from them. I can't thank those guys enough for giving us a chance when no one else would. That's why they are so great. They've taken their success and helped out friends band just like how they got their start. Never forgot were they came from. I love them and they deserve everything; they've earned it all.

The Seattle/Northwest scene is well known for it's grunge image/sound, but has spawned a lot of great hardcore bands as well. Yet, barring Metal Church, Nevermore, Queensryche and Ministry (technically since Paul was from Bellevue), metal has never been the strong suit (or at least commercially successful) of the Emerald City. Do you guys hope to help bring the horns back in full force to the Puget Sound? What bands are you into (any genre) currently from the area? John, are you still doing security at the Graceland in your off time?

Don't forget The Accused, Forced Entry, Sanctuary and Subvert to name a few others. It's great to see alot of hardcore and metal tours coming through town these days. Seattle has always been a hotbed for hardcore and metal, we just never had the venues around like we do now. Yes I'm at Graceland when I am home from tour. Best job and boss in the world. All my "haters" where you at? As far as bands.... TRAGEDY(From Portland,close enough).

How was the Strhess tour?

It was Awesome. Shadows Fall are going to be huge. Once again a band that gave us a chance



and some great friendships have come out of it. We look up to them a lot. As I Lay Dying killed it every night. It was our third time being out with them. Our brothers of the light, love them.

Being an older dude in the scene, what advice do you offer the newer kids?

Go out and buy Cromags "Age of Quarrel".....nuff said.

You have taken younger bands out in the past, for example To See You Broken. Do you like using your notoriety to bring the lesser known into the limelight?

We like to take out bands we admire, respect and have a friendship with. Plus that blond guitar player is way hot, Hi Boo xoxo

Are you guys ever going to do any covers, either on record or live?

We've been talking about each of us picking a cover and doing an EP in the future. I want to do Into Another "Underlord".

The Headbangers Ball tour is one of, if not the biggest tour you've done. Do you feel like this is "making it" and worth all the years you've put in paying dues?

It is most certainly a huge step up from what we've been doing. The hard work is paying off but I think 2005 is gonna be heavy. A bands second release is a true test of what a band is made of. We are very excited for HHB and the exposure is what we need. It's a great cycle to end on.

Do you play any instruments, and have you thought about doing a band other than Himsa?

I can play Joy Division "love will tear us apart" and Unbroken "crushed on you" on bass and that is it. I want to do another straight edge band again and something in the vein of Neurosis/Bloodlet/Threadbare/Jesuit....something heavy and brutal and call it Dead Lovers.

I saw that feature in Revolver where you got a ton of free stuff. Did you keep most of it, or did it go straight on Ebay?

Gave most of it to Matt and he sleeps on it. Traded the shoes for some Starbucks coffee. Thanks to you all for the support. ☺

An Interview With Guttural Secrete



Guitarist/Vocalist Blue Jensen of Guttural Secrete and I talk about the scene in Nevada, Unmatched Brutality Records, samples, guest spots and slasher flicks.

Origins of the band, present line up and touring plans?

We started in 2002 as a five piece, but now we are down to a two piece. As of right now it is hard for us to tour since we work all the time.

Who came up with the name Guttural Secrete?

I did.

How do you classify yourselves? You've got a lot of different styles going on with your record, all brutal, but varying from death, gore, grind, straight technical madness, even a bit of hardcore. Do you have a preference/personal view on defining the sound of Guttural Secrete?

I really don't know, we are influenced by so many different bands, that I don't know how to describe it. I guess if you think that we sound like a certain band, then hopefully they are a good band to be compared to. I am a huge fan of the New York and Texas scene. I prefer a lot more low end in our sound, but we try to balance everything out musically.

On a similar note, what are the main influences of the band?

Like I said before, I am a fan of the New York and Texas bands like Malignancy, Dehumanized, Sect Of Execration and various bands in their vein.

Did you always intend on being a trio or have you thought about adding another guitarist?

Right now we are trying to find a good fucking bassist, but we are looking to add another guitarist hopefully soon.

Nevada is not well known as a hotbed for metal/grind/hardcore. What is the scene like there and do you travel outside of the state often to play shows?

The scene in NV as far as I know sucks ass. There is only a few bands out here that are actually metal. We play shows out of state when we can, but not often. We have full time jobs.

There were no lyrics included with the

copy I received of "Artistic Creation..."

What are your lyrics about and is there a place where fans can check them out?

Our lyrics are pretty much about doing nasty shit to women and degrading them as much as possible. There's nowhere to check out the lyrics yet, but we are working on getting our brand new website up, so they will probably be on there.

There are a ton of samples on your latest. I spotted a few from "Silence Of The Lambs" and "Gangs Of New York." What other films did you pull from and do they have a specific connection with the other lyrics?

Our song Visected in Vaginal Bile has a sample from the movie Freeway. We just liked it because he told some bitch to get her pants down. Now that is some fucking romance!!!

Danny from Malignancy guests on "Slit into Succulence" and "Visected in Vaginal Bile." How did you get hooked up with him?

I've talked to Danny for a while now, and he is one of the best vocalists in the scene by far. I just asked him if he would put some screams on it and he did.

The recording is extremely good, much better than some major metal label output I get. Are you as pleased with it?

We are definitely happy with how it turned out, but our full length is going to be ten times better.

Any plans for a full length in the near future?

It will hopefully be out in mid summer, maybe earlier if we get our shit together.

How is life with Unmatched Brutality?

Unmatched is fucking awesome, we are really cool with everyone there and we are happy with the distribution and promoting they do for us.

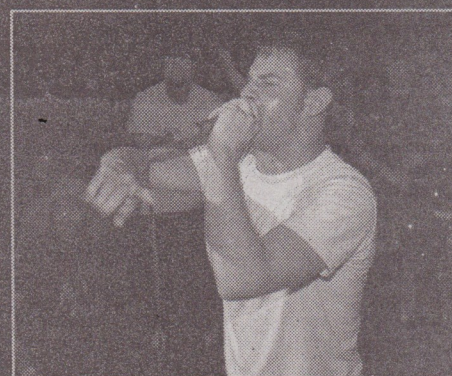
Best slasher flick of all time?

Any one of them that has a dumb bitch getting mutilated in it!!!

Shout outs?

Thanks to you Kirby for this interview bro, and horns up to everyone that has bought our CD, wore our shirt and that has just been fuckin cool!!

An Interview With Bury Your Dead



I checked in with guitarist Slim of Bury Your Dead to find out his thoughts on the new record, Blood Has Been Shed, Tom Cruise, and bassist Rich Casey's indoor petting zoo.

Weirdest place you've ever stayed on tour or strangest person who has taken you in?

We have stayed pretty much everywhere in the united states and Canada and met allot of weird people while doing it, but I would have to say one night in Alabama we went out to eat at this joint we always go to when we are in the Birmingham area, and these two girls were trying to change a tire on there car and we for some reason decided to help and do it for them. Well after getting the new tire on the car they handed us the key to their apartment and said we could come over and shower. We arrived shortly after to these girls making out and fondling another young lady who had too much to drink. Not the weirdest thing that has ever happened to us while staying somewhere but that is all I've got.

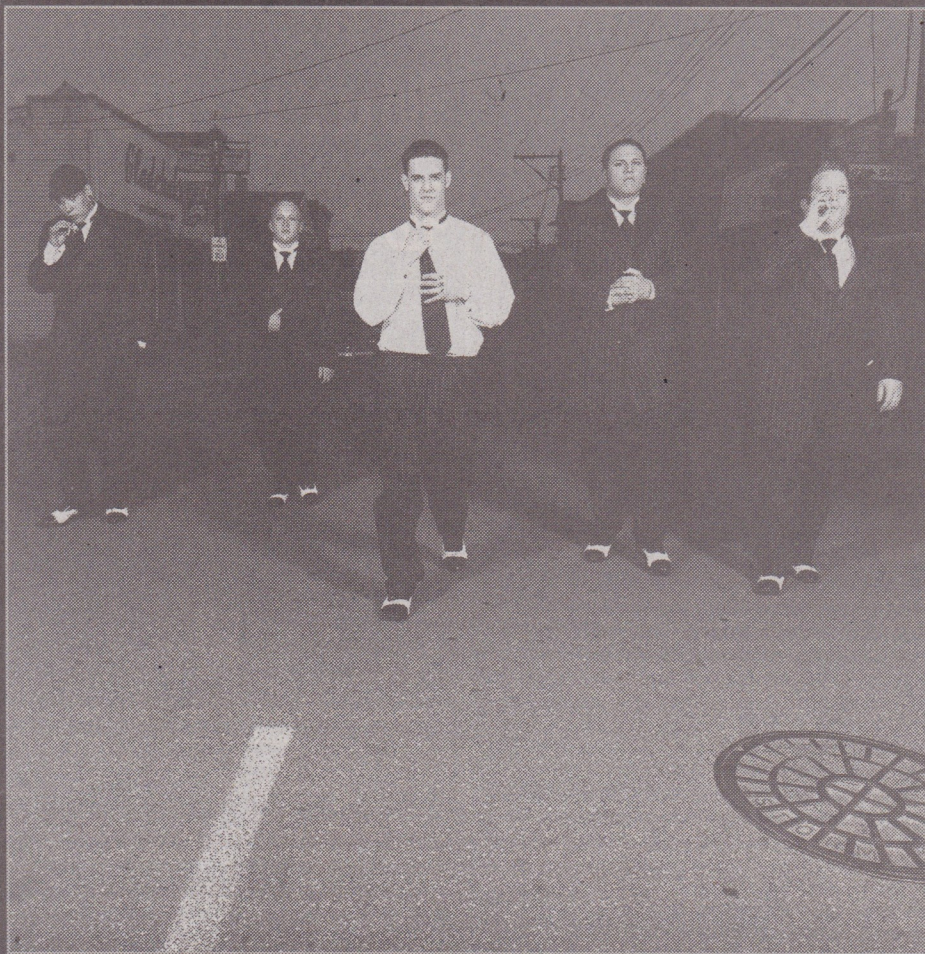
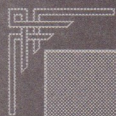
Where are you from, when did BYD begin, and what is the present line up?

I myself am from Massachusetts, Bury Your Dead spawned from a metal band on Goodlife Records that myself and our drummer Mark were in called Hamartia, we decided to just let go and start a simple fun hardcore band and that's what we have done. The lineup as of today consists of myself (Slim), Mark, Rich, Mat, and Eric and I would have to say that this is the most solid this band has been in a long time.

I know you were in Blood Has Been Shed for awhile. Are you still involved with that group at all?

Yes and no, I think that because of recent happenings with Howard of Killswitch Engage fame, as well as myself with Bury Your Dead it doesn't leave a lot of room to do much else, so having said that I think things are at somewhat of a standstill with that project.

Mark also left to play with Between the Buried and Me after you recorded the debut. How did he come to rejoin the



group?

I don't think there was never a time when Mark didn't intend to come back and play for Bury Your Dead, but for personal reasons we had broken up for about 6 months and pursued other projects, whether it be starting a business or playing with other bands. On a us tour with Scars of Tomorrow, A Perfect Murder, BTBAM and BYD, our drummer had a little falling out with landed him in Las Vegas waiting for a plane while mark finished out the tour with us and pretty much came home with us and it was a done deal.

You guys had a hot pink CD last time. What do you have lined up for your latest? It better be aqua blue with sparkles. Hahahaha. Well the old CD was that color merely to annoy people and to make a statement, that pink was the new black, it didn't really catch on except for some smaller towns in Missouri. As far as the new layout is concerned, I think people are going to be pleasantly surprised as to how classy it really is; like us.

What made you choose Victory over other potential suitors?

Because unlike other labels, they have a mascot. The dog you see isn't just for looks, that's bones the bulldog, he is a staple at the victory offices in Chicago, milling around and going through everyones lunch boxes.

Is Alveran going to be repressing "You Had Me...." or is Victory taking over in that dept?

Well you see, after much deliberation on the sub-

ject, bury your dead and Sascha from Alveran decided to flip for it, so on that very day in the summer of 04 we met with our lawyer and held a last minute video conference, there was much sweating and rubel flipping but I'm glad to say that we came out on top walking away from it as friends! But I believe Eulogy will be repressing it in the states.

BYD has been called everything from tough guy to fashioncore. I don't know a whole lot of bands that've been able to do that. Any thoughts on the subject you'd like to share?

I think people are confused, we don't really try to be just one thing, and we do what we like whether that's writing heavy music or dressing a certain way. We just don't fit a certain stereotype. Get off us!

Is Rich still working for Endangered and/or booking tours/shows? How about the printing press business?

Rich Casey is doing all that and more, he has just opened up a indoor petting zoo in his hometown of Southington, Connecticut, which houses many exotic species of miniature horses and features Eellipe the Keloid.

How high is the mosh factor on this CD? Scale of 1-10: 1 being a minor scuffle, 10 a full scale riot.

I would have to give it a twelve, it's a nu kind of heavy is what people have been saying, based on that the first one hundred ordered offline are going to come with a complementary set of moon boots. ☹

An Interview With Napalm Death



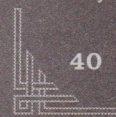
While their van was in the repair shop in midst of tour in Arizona, Napalm Death vocalist Barney Greenway and I talked about Election Day, their web address issues, a recently released second disc of covers, essential listening and the loss of John Peel.

Well it's Election Day in America today. Even though, you obviously won't be a casting vote (being a non-U.S. citizen), any thoughts you'd like to share on the candidates or issues you feel strongly about?

Right now, I've been walking around and there are a lot of people out waving banners and signs, and I've overheard a lot of people talking about whom they are voting for. I think it's just going to get crazier as the night goes on. First and foremost, I'm not the type of guy who is just going to say Bush is an asshole, without any reasons behind it, but I know very well that Bush is an asshole and I'd say anyone but Bush for this election. I don't know necessarily agree with everything Kerry says, I don't think that some of his policies are that far off from what Bush and the Republicans are doing. I saw a debate in Florida earlier, and it's interesting to see how things move along. A gay man was talking about how he wanted to adopt children and the topics of marriage, and both Bush and Kerry seemed to take the stance that traditional heterosexual marriage was/is the only way to go. Right now America needs radical policy. It needs a movement towards proper equality. America is not the only country that needs to do that, but most importantly Bush needs to go. American forces need to stop stomping across the globe, thinking that they can do whatever they want. I hope Bush is going to be gone tonight, and I really hope that someone like Nader will get involved, to help destroy the two party system. Much as I absolutely hate them, it would be good to see someone like the communist party more involved. I think that the two present parties are becoming so much a like, there is absolutely no room for people to make a real decision. I am not anti-American; I'm just anti- the present American administration. I'm not really patriotic at all about England. I actually think that patriotism is what gets in the way of progressive government.

Is Mitch the only guitarist on this tour and if so, how are things working out live with just him?

It works out well. We've toured without Jesse





before. We are such an adaptable band, that no matter what problems may come up, we are able to overcome them.

So how is the tour with Cannibal Corpse/Vader/Kataklysm/Goatwhore going so far?

It's going pretty well. You've got some different bands on this tour, with different audiences. It's nice to see people I haven't seen in awhile, and meet new people. I really enjoy making new friends and seeing old ones.

WWW.ENEMYOFTHEMUSICBUSINESS.COM is your web address, which of course comes from the album of the same name. Why did you choose it for your web address? Did someone already take napalmdeath.com, like a websquatter or something?

I think the various domain names have been taken up and then people wanted to start charging us for them, which of course we weren't going to do. (laughs) Though we may be buying napalmdeath.org right now, most people that come along asking for money for the domain name, we just tell them to fuck right off. (laughs)

I think it's been fairly well documented in previous interviews your problems with Earache, so I won't get into that but on the subject of labels, what made you decide on Century Media? There had to have been plenty of interested parties.

With 15-16 years of being in this band but I've been party of being shafted many, many times. Century Media made a lot of promises, and they've made good on them and then some. They've really been there for us. How it will pan out in the long run, who knows, but I'm really happy thus far.

You just dropped "Leaders Not Followers Part 2," your second CD of covers of some of your favorite hardcore and metal songs. I just wanted to go over some of them, and reasons why they were chosen.

Cryptic Slaughter's "Lowlife":

They were a great crossover band in the 80's. For me, they were the best band in crossover, even better than D.R.I., which is saying a lot. We decided to do that because "Lowlife" is basically their anthem, and the song is anti-gun, which I am, and how masculinity is not attained with a weapon.

Devastation's "Devastation":

There is much said about death metal and who the classic bands are. Among the hundreds of demos that were out in the 80's, Devastation were one of the best. Just great death metal with awesome riffs, vocals and ideas.

Hellhammer's "Messiah":

Celtic Frost were geniuses, but Hellhammer came first and they really had some amazing stuff. A very original style, fantastic package.

Discharge: "War's No Fairytale":

Classic archetypal punk band, but a punk band who took it to the next step up, and made it more brutal, and actually turned a lot of punks off. They were too intense. They are a cornerstone influence of Napalm Death; absolutely vital.

Siege: "Conform"

Quite a cult following, but not nearly as well known or respected as they should be. Like Discharge, one of the primary influences on Napalm Death.

Massacre: "Clangor Of War"

Same thing as Devastation, but a little more popular and well known. Huge influence on the vocals, just classic straight up death metal.

Agnostic Front: "Blind Justice"

The early NYHC scene was pivotal, and Agnostic Front were one of the pioneers, and really helped bridge the gap between the genres of punk and metal.

Kreator: "Riot Of Violence"

We are still influenced by the structure and style of German metal, even to this day. I was a big Kreator fan back in the 80's, but this was definitely Mitch's choice for the album. I like it though. Most of the other tracks are fast and furious, and this adds a different flavor into the mix.

Sepultura: "Troops Of Doom"

A lot of people forget that when Sepultura started out, they were just a straight death metal band like everyone else. They were a very good one, but like the Massacre and Devastation tracks, it's just a great death metal song.

Hirax: "Hate, Fear and Power"

We really liked Hirax, and they also amused, especially with the high pitched vocals. (laughs) They actually just got back together, so I'm interested to see what they do next.

Was it good to have Jim Whiteley back, to perform on Discharge's "War's No Fairytale" and Anti Cimex's "Game Of The Arseholes?"

Jim has always been a friend. He came out to the pub, and we started talking about it, and things ended up working out great.

Which "Leaders Not Followers 2" tracks are you going to be playing live?

Yeah. We only get about 45mins a night so it's hard to cover everything. We are doing a couple off "Leaders Not Followers 2" on this tour.

Napalm Death was always a band that had political and social commentary, (anti-fascism, animal rights, etc), something I still don't see as a commonplace occurrence in metal, where a lot of groups are still talking about Dungeons And Dragons stuff, or slasher movie inspired lyrics. Not saying that I don't like that kind of stuff, but I've always admired you for that. Is that something you originally sought out to do when you started the band?

Definitely. A band reflects the individuals in it. I've always been a humanitarian, and I believe in social justice. I'm involved in the trade union back in England, and I come from a family that has a history in the union. All that carries over into the lyrics and it's always been something I wanted to bring to the table with Napalm Death, the ability to share my political and social views.

You guys put out an official DVD a bit ago. Do you have any hopes/plans to do another one in the future?

In the future, maybe. I'm not sure if we need to put out another one, but if we have a special performance or some great footage, I can see doing a DVD.

Will there be any videos for "Leaders Not Followers 2"?

Century Media are definitely keen on us doing a video. That's a support we've never really had before, so we'll have to wait and see. Either way, we are going to make sure things get done our way, that it's properly done, and is not tacky or grandiose.

This community recently experienced a huge loss with the death of John Peel. As a band who had a strong relationship with the man and his work, what are your thoughts/feelings on his passing? Any beloved memories you'd like to share?

Yes, it's very sad. There are very few people in the world who are truly interested in breaking down the walls between music, and John Peel was one of them. He wasn't afraid to play a Finnish folk piece next to a Napalm Death song and then follow it up with an Afrika Bambaata track. A lot of people may not see that as a good thing, but I do. I think it's completely fantastic. There are certain styles of music that people really raise their eyebrows over, and John Peel made sure they got played. The man just loved music and it showed.

As a band who basically invented a genre, I'm interested in knowing more about who influenced you. If you could tell some of the younger kids and those just getting into the scene records they should own, what would they be?

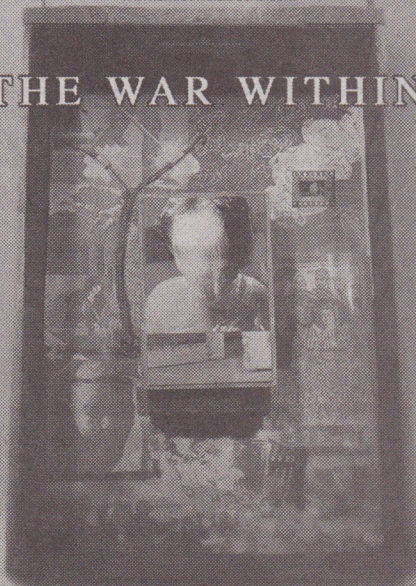
Ok. Here we go: Motorhead-Ace Of Spades, Discharge- the white 12", Repulsion- Horrified, Dropdead, Death-Scream Bloody Gore, and everything Septic Death did.

It's amazing to see you guys still at it. Bands that are half your age, don't put in a fourth of the energy Napalm Death does, live and on record. How do you do it?

At the end of the day, yes, this is a serious band, but I don't know why that for 30-45 minutes a day, you can't just go up there and have fun. That's what we do. It's fucking fun. Even if people don't see it, I always have a huge smile on my face when I go on stage. If there ever comes a day when I don't want to do this anymore, I won't but for right now it's great fun and good times. I have the privilege of getting to travel the world and play the music I love, and have kids go off, and it's just amazing. I'm so thankful. ☺

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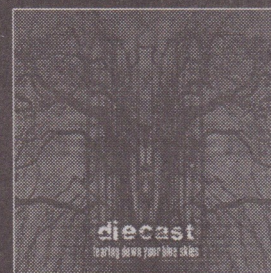


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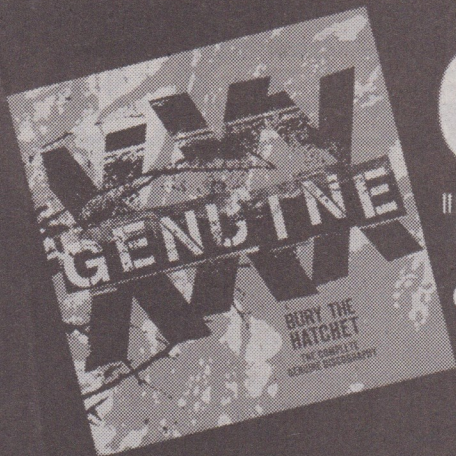


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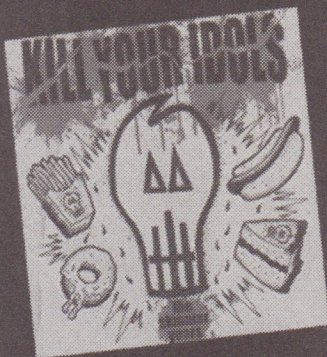
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TIME IN MALTA / BREATHE IN "Split CD"

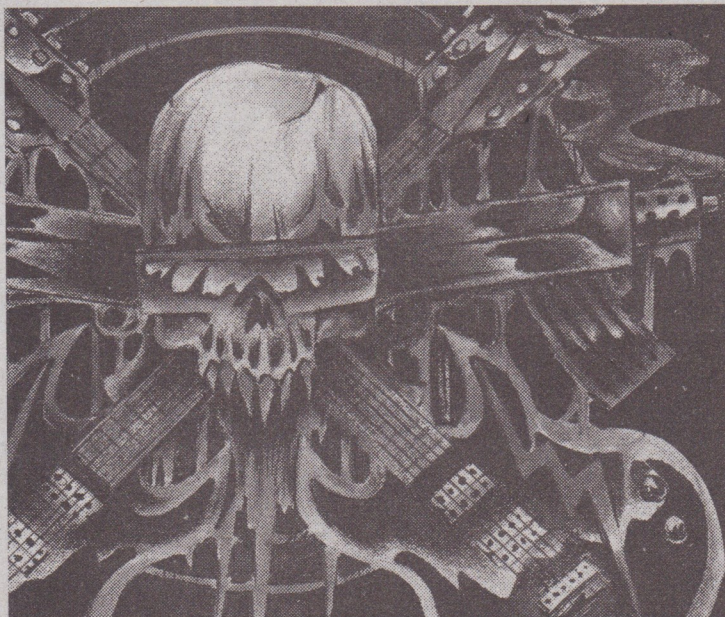
7 songs from these 2 bay area bands. New TIM full length on Equal Vision, BREATHE IN full length on Bridge 9.



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HOT TOPIC

BARS



By Kirby Unrest

From the ashes of various hardcore heavyweights, including American Nightmare, The Hope Conspiracy and The Suicide File, comes Bars. A rough and tumble mix of raw hardcore and dirty rock and roll, Bars are ready to take over the scene with their debut offering from Equal Vision records. I recently had a chance to speak with guitarist Tim "Timbomb" Cossar about why they left mid tour, layouts, the ex-members of tag, and Boston Beatdown. Here is what he had to say...

I THINK THE MOST PRESSING QUESTION ON MANY MINDS' RIGHT NOW IS WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE WEST COAST LEG OF YOUR U.S. TOUR? I'VE HEARD A TON OF RUMORS, INCLUDING THE BAND BROKE UP, MEMBERS LEFT, YOU HATED THE BANDS YOU TOURED WITH AND THAT YOU SIMPLY HAD TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS. IS THERE TRUTH TO ANY OF THESE RUMORS?

Well that's a great question. First off I will say our intentions of this tour were always the best. Ill start off with the fact that we really wanted to tour the west coast when the record came

out. It was getting closer to that time, and since our first release wasn't even out yet, not many people really knew (or know) who we were (are). We accepted this tour, with the idea of playing with different bands, and to really just have an open mind to it all. Well, that didn't go so well. Basically not to sugar coat anything here but...we just didn't like what those bands were about. I'm not going to sit here and talk shit about either Kill Radio or Bullets and Octane, but I will say that to us and most kids that would probably come and see just our band on any of those nights would agree that we come from a different

schooling in punk rock. I think that's safe to say. We thought we had gotten ourselves into an okay situation by agreeing to the tour, and once it was in our face we realized we had made a very large mistake. I also think kids that were coming to see our band on these shows know what they like. They, in a way, have searched us out, because there isn't some huge crazy buzz about us, and our record had only been out for two weeks. We don't want to exclude those kids that are the only people coming to support us right now. And we thought that by doing that tour, it would in fact do just that. We also just wanted our first experience out there to be great, and we knew that if we did this tour, we wouldn't be able to make a first impression ever again. The one thing we could agree on, was that this tour wasn't for us in any way, shape or form. We did make a mistake agreeing to do the tour, and we are truly bummed about that. We did upset a lot of people, and even got some cool threats from the other band's agent. That was great! Thanks! But anyways, yes the band is fine, if not better from this whole

ordeal. You also have to put into perspective that the Red Sox had just won the World Series, and to us that's sorta like one of THE most important things in our lives, being from New England.

ARE YOU PLANNING ON DOING ANOTHER TOUR SOON, INCLUDING WEST COAST DATES?

We are planning to do a full US tour in the spring when we get back from Europe. Our drummer lives in Holland so it makes touring a bit hard sometimes. But things are going fine in that dept.

DID BARS START WHILE YOUR PREVIOUS ACTS WERE STILL GOING, LIKE A SIDE PROJECT, OR WAS IT AFTER THE FACT?

Ahh, we started as a total project between Matt, our bass player, our old drummer Jarrod and myself. Once things got going we had enough for an LP, so we talked with EVR and they said yes. It didn't turn into a full time idea for me until last winter when GHST was still touring. I think we had gotten back from our long tour, and we all sorta agreed that GHST was going to turn part time.

I had just joined The Hope Conspiracy, and I knew that it would work out because Kevin had already been doing Bars for a while, and we had already recorded and worked together in a band.

WHAT WERE YOUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THIS BAND WHEN YOU FORMED (MUSICALLY, LYRICALLY, ETC)?

Well musically i'll just say what each member would say to that question. Matt-Electric Wizard or Sonic's Rendezvous, Adam-Mastodon or the Hellacopters, Ries-The Who, or The Bad Brains, Kevin-Black Sabbath or Turbo Negro, and me the Beach Boys or Danzig. That's a good look into our inspirations/aspirations would have to be to simply be a good band in our own minds. Lyrically I would say it's all over the place. We all write different phrasings, and put them together; one word that would come to mind for me is REAL I guess.

COMING FROM SO MANY FAMOUS FORMER GROUPS, I'M SURE THE "EX MEMBERS OF" STIGMA IS THERE, ESPECIALLY SINCE A COUPLE OF THE GROUPS JUST RECENTLY BROKE UP. IT'S DEFINITELY LIKE YOU GUYS ARE HAVING TO REALLY START OVER, BUT NOT LIKE A CONVENTIONAL BAND WHERE IT'S PLAYING A BUNCH OF SHOWS AND PUTTING OUT RECORDS

TO BUILD YOUR NAME, BUT MORE SO TO RID OTHERS IDEAS THAT THIS JUST SOME KIND OF HARD-CORE SUPERGROUP. DO YOU FEEL THAT WAY OR IS IT SOMETHING YOU INTERPRET DIFFERENTLY? IS THAT MAYBE A REASON WHY YOU CHOSE THE TITLE "INTRODUCING...?"

Yes, to your last question. NO! to the hardcore supergroup thing! Haha. Well we knew that we were going to be put into that group from the get go a little bit. No, wait, a lot. But we are not bummed on our past at all. We are not trying to push that era out of our lives to do some "rock and roll" band. We all still love a lot of hardcore bands, but don't really want to do that



with this band. We have all met through punk rock and hardcore, and we have all traveled the world touring in bands. We love what we have done, and now its time for something different. "Introducing..." because yes this is something a little different, this is a new beginning for us and its also a tip of the hat to the Beatles. God knows they need it.

BARS HAS TRAITS FROM A LOT OF YOUR OTHER BANDS, BUT THERE ARE NEW ELEMENTS BROUGHT TO THE TABLE ON "INTRODUCING..." INCLUDING THE HEAVY TRADITIONAL ROCK AND ROLL INFLUENCE AND STRUCTURES. TO ME, IT'S LIKE A SPED UP, REALLY PISSED OFF VERSION OF THE CLASSIC 50/60'S HEAVYWEIGHTS, BUT EVEN MORE BRUTAL AND ANGRY. I SUPPOSE SOMEONE WOULD SAY THAT'S WHAT PUNK BEGAN AS (RAMONES, NEW YORK DOLLS, STOOGES, T.REX) BUT YOU GUYS HAVE TAKEN IT TO A HIGHER LEVEL IN MY EYES. IS THAT THE SOUND YOU HAD HOPED TO ACHIEVE?

Wow! That's quite a compliment. Well I think when the band started we didn't have any set sound we wanted to really dive into just yet. We wanted to just write really simple songs that had feeling to them. Now that those songs are two years old as we record our new EP, things I think are more focused on this record due to better

structures, and Dynamics. We just want to be a good band. So far in two months of working and getting comfortable with our new drummer Ries, we have all agreed that musically this is the best band we have ever been in. We want our new EP out, cause I think it will be apparent to anyone that we have grown a great deal already.

DO YOU VIEW YOURSELVES AS A HARDCORE BAND, OR JUST A ROCK AND ROLL GROUP? WHY?

We view ourselves as ourselves. We all have grown up on punk, and Rock & Roll.

I REALLY LIKED THE LAYOUT FOR "INTRODUCING..." IT'S VERY SIMPLE AND BARE BONES LIKE YOUR MUSIC. WAS THAT YOUR INTENTION, FOR THE TWO TO MATCH SO TO SPEAK?

Yeah. We have all agreed to keep as much "in the family" so to speak. Adam and Kevin did the layout. Real simple but still classic looking. Someone made an analogy that we were sort of the opposite of most of what's getting thrown out there today.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE WHOLE HOOPLA SURROUNDING BOSTON BEATDOWN? I'VE HEARD

VARYING OPINIONS FROM BEANTOWN KIDS, SO I WAS JUST INTERESTED IN HEARING SOME OF YOUR INPUT, BEING IN A MASS. BAND.

Well, I don't really agree with it, but hey, everyone likes to see drunken frat boys getting beat up right? Maybe that's where I'm from though. I must say that maybe its because my neighborhood has been taken over by college kids, who in return have made it suck. I don't know!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SONG ON THE NEW RECORD? WHY?

"Up To My Neck," because I think it has a little bit of everything we stand for in it. Musically and lyrically. Yea...

WHO IS ON YOUR PLAYLIST RIGHT NOW?

The new Isis, the new Hot Snakes, "Live at Leeds," the new John Frusciante records, the new Mastodon, the new Bjork!

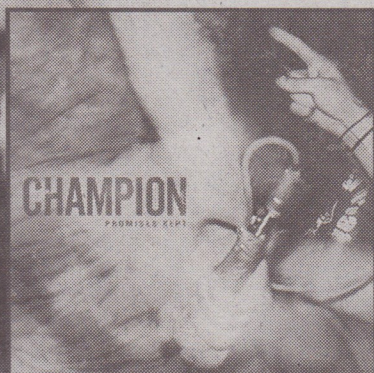
ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD/SHOUT OUTS?

Thanks again to Brett and Kirby, and a huge Sorry to the kids that wanted to see us this Fall. We'll be back soon enough! Thanks! R.I.P. A.J. from The Pound in San Francisco. ☞

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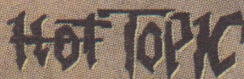
Alove For Enemies "The Harvest" - March 29

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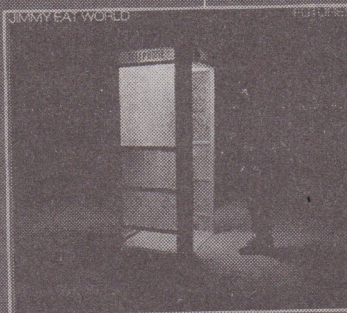
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YOUR FAVORITE BANDS' TOP ALBUMS OF 2004

Well, aside from our recent realization that the majority of our fine little country is a bunch of homophobic, bible thumpin', war mongerin' red necks, which I guess any NASCAR fan could have told you (sorry, I'll try to keep my chocolate out of yer' peanut butter [I mean, I'll stick to the music]), this has been an absolutely amazing year. I must admit, I spend the majority of my musical indulgence time allotted listening to older records, but I found my self enamored this year with the quality and abundance of great releases. I must say, I think the thing that surprised me the most, and I'm not quite sure why it came as a surprise to me as all these bands have always been linked to greatness, but the amount of bands that I grew up on, such as THE DESCENDENTS, GREEN DAY, SOCIAL DISTORTION, BAD RELIGION (which by the way, their new record is amazing, but hell- this year saw the reissue of probably 5 of the 20 greatest record of all time in BAD RELIGION's back catalog. You could have ended the year right there and had it be a success!) which are showing up in people's best of lists in 2004. Just goes to show you- there's a hell of a difference between a lucky riff and a decent record, and a brilliant set of writers and an amazing career. Anyways, there were also torch bearers for the future that looked a lot stronger than most I have seen over the last many years in bands such as AGAINST ME!, THIRTY3, PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS, A WILHELM SCREAM, STRIKE ANYWHERE, ONLY CRIME, CONVERGE, THE METHADONES, BARS, COMMUNIQUE, and so many more, all of whom put out brilliant records this year. We also got a lot of special treats such as records by THE NETWORK, which hopefully won't be their only installment, the release of the much anticipated RUMBLESEAT (acoustic record from members of HOT WATER MUSIC and BITCHIN') record, a brilliant piece of work in a band called SEX POSITIONS, the AT THE DRIVE IN catalog reissued, and hopefully what won't be the last chapter in my favorite book of recent times, GUNMOLL. Yeah, '04 kicked ass. In the following pages, you will find a lot of our friends talking about their records of the year. I would encourage you to look into some of these records, especially if they are recommended by bands you respect, or you like the other suggestions on somebody's list. Places online such as Interpunk, etc... have tidbits of MP3's that you can listen to, and you might just find a new favorite band. Enjoy the lists, and props to the bands that listed their own records as records of the year. I would hope so. I hope next year is as audibly enjoyable as this one. New releases from AGAINST ME!, THIRTY3, SLAYER, a new band (at least to most of us) called JEHRICO, NORA, and a frickin' new PROPAGHANDI record (by the way, again props to Todd The Bod from PROPAGHANDI for having DIO on his end of the year list. You rule!!) all slated for the upcoming year; should be a good one. Enjoy!—**Scooter**



BEST OF '04 LIST

Lisa / Ass Kicker in Chief at AMP

Magazine (Are you gunna tell her she can only do three? I'm not! - Scoot)
 GUNMOLL "Board Of Rejection" (Since I we didn't do a best of 2003 last year.)
 AGAINST ME! "As The Eternal Cowboy" (Another I want to squeak into this years!)
 BULLET TREATMENT "What More Do You Want?"
 COMMUNIQUE "Poison Arrows"
 GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
 SOME GIRLS "All My Friends Are Going Death"
 BLACK COUGAR SHOCK UNIT "S/T"
 BARS "Introducing..."
 ALKALINE TRIO/ ONE MAN ARMY "Split"
 SATURDAY LOOKS GOOD TO ME "Every Night"

Dan Mazin/ UNTIL THE END/ Eulogy Recordings

THE CARDIGANS "Long Gone Before Daylight"
 THE WARRIORS "War Is Hell"
 ONLY CRIME "To the Nines"



Luke / Falcom Records

AWAY FROM HERE "Anatomy Of A Broken Heart"
 RISE AGAINST "Siren Song Of The Counter Culture"
 MOURNINGSTAR "Distrato"

Mark Enoch / Knock Knock Records

EVEN IN BLACKOUTS "Zeitgeist's Echo"
 BIG IN JAPAN "Who Really Needs A Heart Anyway"
 THE COPYRIGHTS "We Did'nt Come Here To Die"

Christopher / EVERGREEN TERRACE

JIMMY EAT WORLD "Futures"
 TWELVE TRIBES "Rebirth of Tragedy"
 SOUTH "With the Tides"

Mike / PAULSON

TORTOISE "It's All Around You"
 THE WRENS "The Meadowlands"

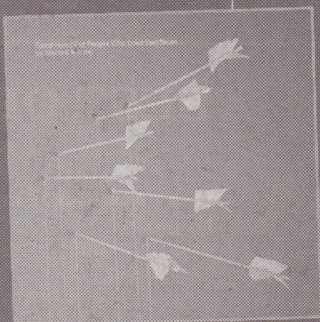
PIG DESTROYER "Terrifier"

Darren Walters / Jade Tree

TED LEO "Shake The Sheets"
The Triplets of Belleville Soundtrack
THE CURE "Join The Dots" Box Set

Stevejff / Radiotakeover / NORA

MISERY SIGNALS
"Of Malice And The
Magnum Heart"
MODEST MOUSE
"Good News For
People Who Love
Bad News"
THE DILLINGER
ESCAPE PLAN "Miss
Machine"

**Johnny / THE BODIES / Radio Records**

THE BRIEFS "Sex Objects"
THE MARKED MEN "On the Outside"
OILI "The Glory of Honour"

Chris Hnat / Lumberjack Distribution

The Briefs "Sex Objects" BYO Records
Schoiastic Death "Complete Discography:
Schoiastic Death's Final Examiner" 625
Thrash
Social Distortion "Sex, Love and Rock 'n
Roll" Time Bomb Recordings

Jeff Jawk / Bridge 9 / Deathwish

CHAMPION "Promises Kept"
ISIS "Panopticon"
MASTADON "Leviathan"

David / StayGold Records

JERSEY "Generation Genocide"
THE BREAK "Handbook for the Hopeless"
STREET DOGS "Savin Hill" (even though
it's not new)

Eric and Darrick / RocketStar Records

DAVE ATTELL "Skanks For The Memories"
DJ DANGER MOUSE/JAYZ/THE BEATLES
"The Grey Album"
UNDEROATH "They're Only Chasing
Safety"

Shawn Keith / CALICO SYSTEM / Eulogy Recordings

TAKING BACK SUNDAY "Tell all Your
Friends"
REMEMBERING NEVER "Women and
Children Die First"
YELLOWCARD "Ocean
Avenue"

Travis Ryan / CATTLE DECAPITATION

NECROPHAGIST
"Epitaph"
LEVIATHAN "Tentacles
Of Whorror"
THE POLYPHONIC
SPREE "Together
We're Heavy"

**Mossy / THE HEAVILS**

MASTADON "Leviathan"
FEAR FACTORY "Archetype"
MISERY SIGNALS "Of Malice and the
Magnum Heart"

Dan / SUICIDE MACHINES

INTERPOL "Interpolantics"
THE KILLERS "Hot Fuss"
FRANZ FERDINAND "Franz
Ferdinand"

Gavin Phillips / THIS PROVIDENCE

BRANDSTON "Send Us a Signal"
JUNE - S/T
PHANTOM PLANET "Phantom
Planet"

Carlos / ON OUR OWN

FOLSOM self-titled full
length,
TERROR "One With the
Underdogs"
DEATH THREAT "Now
Here Fast"

Steve Martyr / Martyr Records

MARTYR A.D. "On Earth
As It Is In Hell"
CAST ASIDE "The
Struggle"
OLD MAN GLOOM
"Christmas"

Eric Marcelino / SEX POSITIONS

AIR "Talkie Walkie"
DENALI "The Instinct"
SCISSOR SISTERS s/t

Michael Saraceno / ANADIVINE

FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER "Hide
Nothing"
DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"
ME WITHOUT YOU "Catch for us the Foxes"

**Ken Dirtnap / Dirtnap Records**

REIGNING SOUND "Too
Much Guitar"
RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS
"Backsides"
SOVIETTES "LP2"

Scott Peacock / EMBRACE TODAY

BLEEDING THROUGH "This is Love,
This is Murderous"
ATREYU "The Curse"
UNDEROATH "They're Only Chasing
Safety"

Tre / Deathwish Records

CHAMPION "Promises Kept"
CONVERGE "You Fail Me"
SOPHIA "People Are Like Seasons"
(late 2003 but I don't care)

Clayton / THE JUDAS CRADLE

MISERY SIGNALS "Of Malice and the
Magnum Heart"
LAMB OF GOD "Ashes of the Wake"
UNEARTH "The Oncoming Storm"

Mike Virus / CHEAP SEX / Punkcore Records

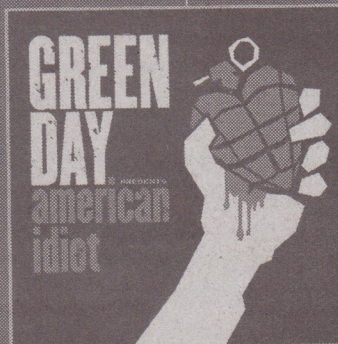
STIFF LITTLE FINGERS "Guitar and Drum"
RESISTANCE 77 "Long Time Dead"
WOLF BRIGADE - "A D-Beat Odyssey"

Keith in Hell/ Hellfest

THE BLINDING LIGHT "The Ascension
Attempt"
SHADOWS FALL "The War Within"
THE FAINT "Wet From Birth"

Tony / NO USE FOR A NAME

GREEN DAY "American
Idiot"
BADLY DRAWN BOY "One
Plus One is One"
BLUR "The Best of...."

**LOSA / collective**

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN
"Miss Machine"
CONVERGE "You Fail Me"
MESHUGGAH "I"

Jordan Mancino / AS I LAY DYING

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE "The End of
Heartache"
MEGADETH The Remasters
PROBOT

Diego GroM Meraviglia / ANCIENT

A PERFECT CIRCLE "Thirteenth Step"
DREAM THEATER "Train Of Thought"
BORKNAGAR "Epic"

Rory / NO USE FOR A NAME

PROBOT
BAD RELIGION "Empire Strikes 1st"
BLINK 182 s/t

Joe / RISE AGAINST

ONLY CRIME "To The Nines"
THE FAINT "Wet From Birth"
BAD RELIGION "The Empire Strikes First"

From Ferret Records land-Portland:

CONVERGE "You Fail
Me"
ELLIOTT SMITH "From a
Basement on the Hill"
TWELVE TRIBES "The
Rebirth of Tragedy"

**Carl:**

CONVERGE "You Fail Me"
MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE "3 Cheers for
Sweet Revenge"
SCARLET "Cult Classic"

Rick:

CONVERGE "You Fail Me"
HEAD AUTOMATICA "Decadence"
ZAO "Funeral of God"

John O'Hagan / WHERE EAGLES DARE

CRIME IN STEREO "Explosives and the Will to Use Them"
STIKE ANYWHERE "Exit English"
CHAMPION Promises Kept"

Annie / THE SOVIETTES

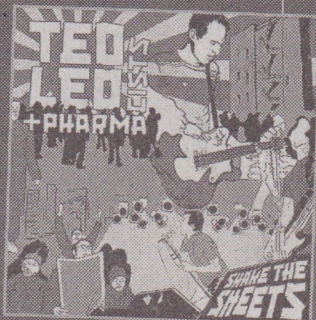
THE MARKED MEN "On the Outside"
THE BLACK KEYS "Rubber Factory"
THE HUNCHES "Hobo Sunrise"

Corey Williams / INTERNAL AFFAIRS

TERROR "One With The Underdogs"
CHAMPION "Promises Kept"
THE WARRIORS "War is Hell"

David Wagenschutz / GOOD RIDDANCE / NONE MORE BLACK

MASTODON "Leviathan"
TED LEO & THE PHARMACISTS "Shake the Sheets"
FRANZ
FERDINAND
"Franz Ferdinand"

**Ben Perri / FROM AUTUMN TO ASHES**

TAKING BACK SUNDAY
"Where You Want to Be"
THE HONORARY TITLE
"Anything Else But the Truth"
HEAD AUTOMATICA "Decadence"

Ben / NO WARNING

FUCKED UP "Epics in Minutes"
HATEBREED "Rise Of Brutality"
VELVET REVOLVER "Contraband"

**DEATH BY STEREO :**

Dan :
SHADOWS FALL "The War Within"
MUSE "Absolution"
YINGWE MALMSTEEN "Attack"

Todd:

BLACK EYED PEAS "Elefunk"
THE USED "In Love and Death"

THE HIVES "Tyrannasaurushives"

Efrem:

FEAR FACTORY "Archetype"
OZOMATLI "Street Signs"
LIL' WAYNE "The Carter"

Tito

THE VIDEO DEAD "demo"
YINGWE MALMSTEEN "Attack"
BAD RELIGION "The Empire Strikes First"

Jon / BUCK-O-NINE

GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
FLOGGING MOLLY "Within A Mile of Home"
TOM WAITS "Real Gone"

Carl Bouchard / A PERFECT MURDER

MEGADETH "The System Has Failed"
GOD FORBID "Gone Forever"
METALLICA "Some Kind of Monster"

Andy / MARTYR AD

There were too many good records this year for me to decide on 3 so I'm making this a "Old punk bands that are keeping themselves relevant by putting out great records this year" list:
GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
SOCIAL DISTORTION "Sex, Love and Rock n' Roll"
BAD RELIGION "The Empire Strikes First"

Robert (Bob) Bradley / SCARS OF TOMORROW

STORY OF THE YEAR
"Page Avenue"
CALIBAN "The Opposite from Within"
KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
"The End of Heartache"

Tom Stretton / A18.

MORRISSEY "You Are The Quarry"
MARTYR AD "On Earth As It Is In Hell"
TERROR "One With The Underdogs"

Tim / THE EPOXIES.

THE BRIEFS "Sex Objects"
THE SOVIETTES "LP II"
OPERATIONS s/t

Guy Kozowyk / THE RED CHORD / Black Market Activities

MUSE "Absolution"
PREMONITIONS OF WAR "Left in Kowloon"
PSYOPUS "Ideas of Reference"

Trevor / UNEARTH

LAMB OF GOD "Ashes of the Wake"
MASTADON "Leviathan"
ZAO "The Funeral of God"

WINTER SOLSTICE (collective)

LAMB OF GOD "Ashes of The Wake"
UNEARTH "The Oncoming Storm"
UNDEROATH "They're Only Chasing Safety"

Jordan / JERSEY

BILLY TALENT
EVE 6 "It's all in Your Head"
GOB "Foot in Mouth Disease"

Chris Spicuzza / CHIMAIRA

THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"
SLIPKNOT Vol 3
LAMB OF GOD "Ashes of the Wake"

Mark Hunter / CHIMAIRA

IN FLAMES "Soundtrack To Your Escape"
SLIPKNOT Vol 3
FEAR FACTORY "Archetype"

Chris Arp / PSYOPUS

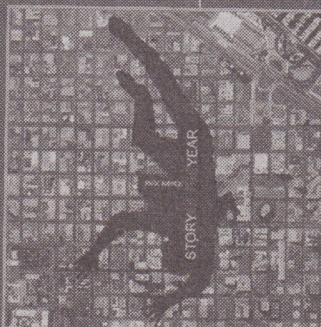
PERFECT CIRCLE "13th Step"
THE WE "The Chrome Album"
TODAY IS THE DAY "Kiss the Pig"

Dicky Barrett / MIGHTY MIGHTY BOS-STONES

Rock against Bush Compilations - 1 and 2
GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
BRIAN WILSON "Smile"

KT / THE BREAK

WILCO "A Ghost is Born"
STRIKE ANYWHERE "Exit English"
MARATHON "Songs to Turn the Tide"

**Brendan / THE LAWRENCE ARMS**

GOOD LIFE "Album of the Year"
GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
HOT WATER MUSIC "The New What Next"

Paul / NONE MORE BLACK

MASTODON "Leviathan"
TED LEO AND THE PHARMACISTS "Shake the Sheets"
DISFEAR "Misanthropic Generation"

Josh / EVERGREEN TERRACE / CASEY JONES

LARS FREDRICKSON AND THE BAS-TARDS "Viking"
100 DEMONS s/t
ANCHORS AWAY demo

Gary Mann / IF HOPE DIES

THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"
THE SNAKE THE CROSS THE CROWN
"Mander Salis"
BJORK "Medulla"

Anthony / BAYSIDE

MORRISSEY "You Are The Quarry"
PUNCHLINE "Action"
GET UP KIDS "On A Wire"

Mike McKenzie (aka Gunface) / THE RED CHORD

MASTODON "Leviathan"
RWAKE "If You Walk Before You Crawl,
You Crawl Before You Die"
SHAPE OF DESPAIR "Illusion's Play"

Kieth Allen / FOUND DEAD HANGING

ISIS "Panopticon"
PIG DESTROYER "Terrifier"
THE BLINDING LIGHT "The Ascension
Attempt"

Aaron Jenkins / ED GEIN

THE MINOR TIMES "Making Enemies"
LICKGOLDENSKY s/t
CROWPATH "Old Cuts and Blunt Knives"

Jeff and Connor / BOYS NIGHT OUT

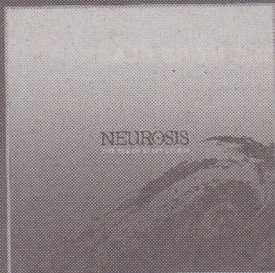
PEDRO THE LION
"Achilles Heel"
SAY ANYTHING
"...Is a Real Boy"
AS TALL AS LIONS
"Lafcadio"

Nathan Gearhart / VEHEMENCE

SLIPKNOT Vol 3
DEICIDE "Scars of
the Crucifix"
VEHEMENCE
"Helping the World the See"
Anyone with problems with this list are
more than welcome to go fuck them-
selves!

Kieths Buckley / EVERY TIME I DIE

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"
CHROMEO "Shes in Control"
BJORK "Medulla"



Andy Williams / EVERY TIME I DIE

IT DIES TODAY
"Cardiff Choir"
DILLINGER
ESCAPE PLAN
"Miss Machine"
NEUROSIS "Eye
of the Storm"

Nick Hipa / AS I LAY DYING

MUSE "Absolution"
BJORK "Medulla"
THE PAPERCHASE "God Bless Your Black
Heart"

Jake Brown / MOMENTS IN GRACE

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"
DECAHEDRON "Disconnection Imminent"

HISTORY (INVADES) "The Structure of a
Precise Fashion"

Aaron / BRAZIL

TV ON THE RADIO "Desperate..."
ENGINE DOWN - s/t
THE PAPERCHASE
"God Bless Your
Black Heart"

Jonathan / BRAZIL

TV ON THE RADIO
"Desperate Youth,
Bloodthirsty Babes"
FACING NEW YORK
"Swimming Not
Treading"
SPARTA "Porcelain"

**SENSES FAIL (col-
lective)**

PEDRO THE LION "Achilles Heel"
DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"
BLINK 182 s/t

**Kris Upjohn / AMP Magazine
writer**

MESHUGGAH "I"
THE SCISSOR SISTERS "s/t"
RAMROD RAPEROKK
AND THE NASTY
NYMPHOS "Sloppy
Seconds"

**Daniel / LAST OF THE
FAMOUS.**

THE BLEED "With Pass
The..."
NEW FOUND GLORY
"Catalyst Record"
DIVISION OF LAURA LEE
"Das Not Compute"

Chris / SAVES THE DAY

SAY ANYTHING "Say Anything Is A Real Boy"
BRIAN WILSON "Smile"
GREEN DAY "American Idiot"

**Willie Samuels / THE INFLUENTS / Nu
Tone Recording Studios**

GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
WILCO "A Ghost Is"
THE NETWORK "Money Money, 2020"

Ben Goreskin / GOREROTTED

AMON AMARTH "Fate Of Norns"
SCREAMIN' DAEMON "The Decline Of The
English Murder"
DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss Machine"

Mike Scheidt / YOB

RUNEMAGICK "On Funeral Wings"
INCANTATION "Decimate Christendom"
UNLEASHED "Sworn Allegiance"

Tim Lambesis / AS I LAY DYING

MASTODON "Leviathan"

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE "The End of
Heartache"
LAMB OF GOD "Ashes of the Wake"

Frank / A PERFECT MURDER

PREMONITIONS OF WAR "Left in
Kowloon"
MASTODON "Leviathan"
MESHUGGAH "I"

**Rudy / GATSBYS AMERICAN
DREAM**

NAME TAKEN "Hold On"
BLOOD BROTHERS "Crimes"
THE STROKES "Room on Fire"

**Kirk / GATSBYS AMERICAN
DREAM**

THE BLOOD BROTHERS
"Crimes"
LORETTA LYNN "Van Lear Rose"
THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES "Oxeneers..."

**Brett Detar / THE JULIANA THEORY /
BELASANA**

THE STILLS "Logic Will Break Your Heart"
LORETTA LYNN "Van Lear Rose"
THE CARDIGANS "Long Gone Before
Daylight"

**Chris Evenson / BELASANA
/ SENSE FIELD**

GUIDED BY VOICES "Half
Smiles of the Decomposed"
THE SHINS "Chutes Too
Narrow"
SNOW PATROL "Final Straw"

FM Static / THE EPOXIES

THE SPITS "The Spits"
THE MINDS "Plastic Girls"
THE PUNK GROUP "International Rock Stars"

Steve / ACROSS FIVE APRILS

UNDEROATH "They're Only Chasing
Safety"
BLINDSIDE "About a Burning Fire"
ACROSS FIVE APRILS "Living in the
Moment"

Eric Silvay / CALIGULA

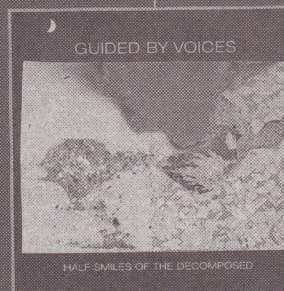
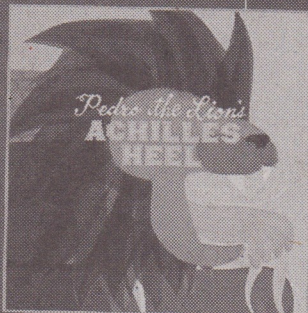
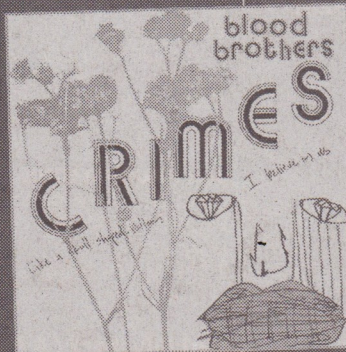
STRIKE ANYWHERE "Exit English"
MISERY SIGNALS "Of Malice and the
Magnum Heart"
PSYOPUS "Ideas of Reference"

**Brian Eschbach / THE BLACK DAHLIA
MURDER**

NECROPHAGIST "Epitaph"
DECAPITATED "The Negation"
MESSHUGGAH "I"

Kyle Kapow / Kapow Records

NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS "Abattoir
Blues/The Lyre Of Orpheus"
REIGNING SOUND "Too Much Guitar"
HOT SNAKES "Audit In Progress"



Travis / F-UPS

LETTER KILLS "The Bridge"
 KILLSWITCH ENGAGE "The End Of The Heartache"
 GREEN DAY "American Idiot"

Chris / LAST PERFECTION

MISERY SIGNALS
 "Of Malice and the
 Magnum Heart"
 UNEARTH "The
 Oncoming Storm"
 PRAYER FOR
 CLEANSING "The
 Tragedy"

**Jason / WESTERN ADDICTION.**

MASTODON
 "Leviathan"
 COLISEUM s/t
 VICTIMS "In
 Blood"

Joey Cape / LAGWAGON

JOHNNY CASH "My Mothers Hymn Book"
 SNOW PATROL "Final Straw"
 AGAINST ME! We're Never Going Home
 DVD

Meegan / CHE: CHAPTER 127

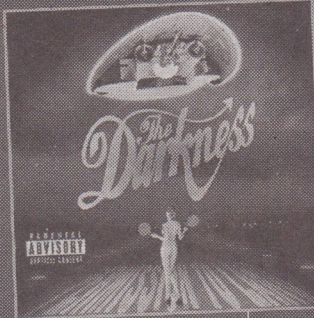
END THIS WEEK WITH KNIVES "We Are
 So Transparent"
 K-OS "Joyful Rebellion"
 CLANN ZU "Black Coats & Bandages"

Matt Gossman / THE MOAT

NECROPHAGIST "Epitaph"
 MISERY SIGNALS "Of Malice and the
 Magnum Heart"
 CONVERGE "You Fail Me"

Sonny / GFK

THE DILLINGER
 ESCAPE PLAN
 "Miss Machine"
 THE DARKNESS
 "Permission to
 Land"
 THE FULLBLAST
 "Contagious
 Movement Theory"

**Marc Code / THE CODE**

GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
 Rock Against Bush Comps - Vol 1+2
 THE RIVER CITY REBELS "Hate To Be
 Loved"

JP / Repossession Records:

PERFECT CIRCLE "13th Step"
 BEBEL GILBERTO "Tanto Tempo"
 MODEST MOUSE "Good News For People
 Who Love Bad News"

Chuck / Basement Records

TEXAS THIEVES "Killer On Craig's List"

BULLET TREATMENT "What More Do You
 Want?"
 REHASHER "Off Key Melodies"

Richie / Cut Shallow

HOT WATER MUSIC "The New What Next"
 GREEN DAY "American Idiot"
 RISE AGAINST "Siren Song of the
 Counter Culture"

D.C. / BULLET TREATMENT

BAD RELIGION "How Could Hell
 Be Any Worse?" (reissue)
 BAD RELIGION "No Control"
 (reissue)
 BAD RELIGION "The Empire
 Strikes First"

John Chavez / VEHEMENCE

III DISPOSED "1-800-Vindication"
 BLOODBATH "Nightmares Made

Flesh"
 ARSIS "The Celebration of Guilt"

Eron / HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

EMERY "The Weak End"
 MUSE "Absolution"
 THE KILLERS "Hot Fuss"

Tommy / BETWEEN THE BURIED AND ME

THE FAINT "Wet From
 Birth"
 MUSE "Absolution"
 MAGNETIC FIELDS "I"

Ariel / GLASSEATER

OWEN E.P.
 ONLY CRIME "To the
 Nines"
 MORRISSEY "You
 are the
 Quarry"

**Riley / THRICE**

I think it's been a
 great year for new music, and pick-
 ing three records
 has been really tough, but if I had to
 pick 3 that have gotten the most
 spins on the iPod this year, I'd go
 with...
 DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN "Miss
 Machine"

ISIS "Panopticon"
 SQUAREPUSHER "Ultravisitor"

Jonathan Lullo / DOWN TO EARTH APPROACH

SAY ANYTHING "Is A Real Boy"
 GARDEN STATE "Soundtrack"
 NORTHSTAR "Polyanna"

Aixa / GO BETTY GO

GREENDAY "American Idiot"
 SUGARCULT "Palm Trees and Powerlines"
 LOS ABANDONED "Self titled EP"

Joey / THE BRIGGS

ELVIS COSTELLO "The Delivery Man/ Il
 Sogno"
 THE CASUALTIES "On the Front Line"
 ANGEL CITY OUTCASTS "Let It Ride"

Jon Berry / RUFIO

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE "The End of
 Heartache"
 THE DO NOTS "Got the Noise"
 DON'T LOOK DOWN "The Fear In Love"

Jay Reason / Stillborn Records / THE DISTANCE

OLTBREAK "You Make Us
 Sick"
 UNDEROATH "Your only
 Chasing Safety"
 TERROR "One With The
 Underdogs"

Johnny Minardi / LLR Recordings

SAY ANYTHING "Is A Real Boy"
 THE SNAKE, THE CROSS, THE CROWN
 "Mander Salis"
 JIMMY EAT WORLD "Futures"

Jordan / MATCHBOOK ROMANCE

ELLIOT SMITH "The Basement on the Hill"
 MUSE "Absolution"
 TAKING BACK SUNDAY "Where you Want
 to be"

Todd / MICO

DESCENDENTS "Cool to
 be You"
 DESTROYER "Your Blues"
 CHALLENGER "Give
 People What They Want In
 Lethal Doses"

**THE PLOT TO BLOW UP THE EIFFEL TOWER (col-
lective)**

THE LIBERTINES - S/T
 THE FALL "Real New Fall"
 CHINESE STARS "Rare

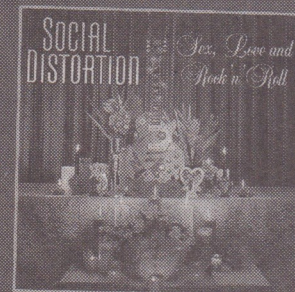
Sensation"

Todd / PROPAGHANDI

DIO "Master of the Moon"
 SNFU "In the Meantime and In Between
 Time"
 ROKIA TRAORE "Bowmbo"

Russ / ONLY CRIME / GOOD RIDDANCE

SOCIAL DISTOR-
 TION "Sex, Love
 and Rock n Roll"
 THE BREAK
 "Handbook for
 the Hopeless"
 LOS DRY-
 HEAVERS
 "Heartaches,
 Hangovers & Hang Ups"





Mark / ACTION ACTION

NADA SURF "Let Go"
WILCO "A Ghost is"
ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN "Ocean Rain" (reissue)

Matthew Fox / SHAIHULUD

EXODUS "Tempo Of The Damned"
THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS "The Spine"
FURTHER SEEMS FOREVER "Hide Nothing"

Robert Meadows / A LIFE ONCE LOST

SUNN O)))
"White 2"
NEUROSIS "Eye of Every Storm"
MASTODON "Leviathan"



Tristan / Radio Takeover

THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES
"Oxeneers ..."
DEATH FROM ABOVE 1979
"You're A Woman, I'm A Machine"
GREEN DAY
"American Idiot"

David Walter (contributing writer and associate editor of Sound The Sirens)

THE SNAKE, THE CROSS, THE CROWN
"Mander Salis"
STRAYLIGHT RUN s/t
SAY ANYTHING " ...Is a Real Boy"

Thomas / AGAINST ME!

THE STREETS "A Grand Don't Come For Free"
MIRAH C'MON "Miracle"
COMMUNIQUE "Poison Arrow"

Marko 72 / SUGARCULT / BAD ASTRONAUT

No Thanks Punk box set
COMMUNIQUE "Poison Arrows"
TIM CULLEN "Fun Razor"

Jorge Orsoyay / AF Records Label Manager

BEHIND ENEMY LINES "The Global Cannibal"
PIG DESTROYER "Terrifier"
VOICE IN THE WIRE "Signals in Transmission"

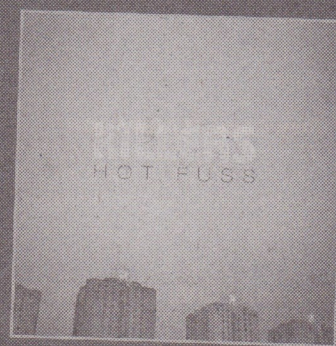
A-F RECORDS

Jordan / Pastepunk.com

BAD RELIGION "The Empire Strikes First"
KILLSWITCH ENGAGE "The End of Heartache"
CHAMPION "Promises Kept"

Joey / GATSBY'S AMERICAN DREAM

THE KILLERS
"Hot Fuss"
NAME TAKEN (the new one on Fiddler)
BLOOD BROTHERS
"Crimes"



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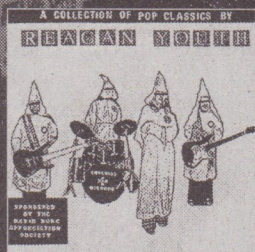
ULTRAMAN

The Constant Weight Of Zero Enhanced CD

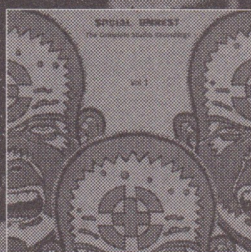
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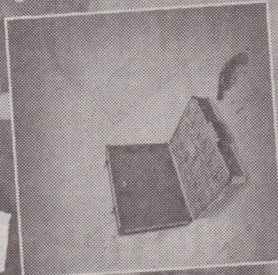


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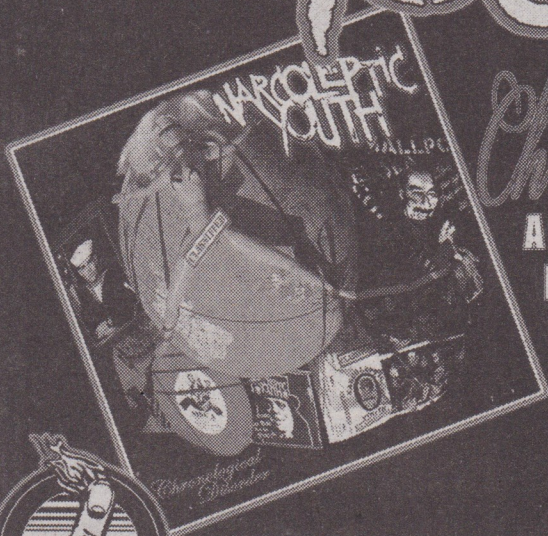


copeland

"BENEATH MEDICINE TREE"
ON TOUR NOW!

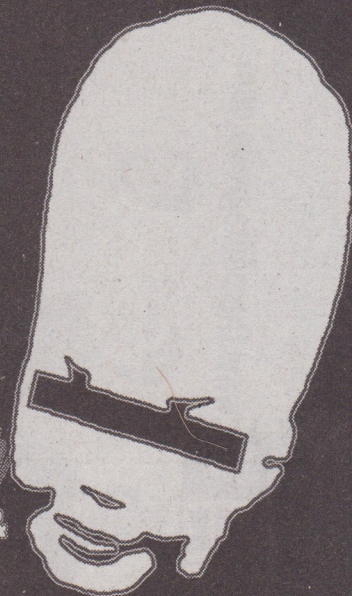


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BANDS AND THEIR VANS



AN INTERVIEW WITH KATE FROM THE FIGHT

LET'S GET STARTED WITH SOME QUICK QUESTIONS BEFORE WE EXPLORE THE INNER-WORKINGS OF YOUR VAN.

NAME: Kate Sarah Julie Elizabeth Turley the 3rd

BAND NAME: The Fight

VAN NAME: Lord Cuntly Bollocks

MAKE: Dunno - I'm not sure of the American model names.....

MODEL: ????

YEAR: ??? screwin - dunno?

DOES THE BAND HAVE ANY INTERESTING MODIFICATIONS, I.E. LOFT, BIGGER ENGINE, DIAMOND WINDOWS, FANCY PAINT? DID YOU DO THEM?

Yeah we have some rad Giovani rims that spin when we stop at traffic lights. We had a bad ass spoiler fitted on the back. We had the whole thing lowered by four inches and the paint job is a custom cherry black lacquer with silver glitter sheen.....Nice. The interior is Italian leather in custom deep red and the carpets are black with "The Fight" embroidered into them. It also has two 22inch plasma screens that automatically drop from the roof, and when our alarm goes off, it's Christina Aguilera saying, "Don't come closer, you dirty boy"...It's pretty pimp.

WHERE DID YOU GET IT?

I don't know where it was bought - I was in England when it was got.

IS THERE ANY HISTORY BEHIND THE VAN?

We like to think that our van has had some interesting times... We figure it had something to do with the A team.... Would be better if it had something to do with J Lo.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?

Half a year maybe???

WHERE HAVE YOU TAKEN IT ON TOUR?

From west to east and back again. It's been all over the states.... We wanna ship it to England though - we don't have vans over here like that...They just don't exist.

HOW MANY MILES HAVE YOU PUT ON IT?

Me personally none - I'm not allowed to drive it cuz I don't have a U.S license..... As a band though....A lot...

WHERE DO YOU PLAN ON TAKING IT (UP-COMING TOURS)?

Again all around the states. This time from east to



west and back again...

IS THERE A DRIVER IN THE BAND, I.E. THE ONE WHO IS ALWAYS BEHIND THE WHEEL? WHO? WHY?

We have Coliiiiin to drive our van.... None of us lot are actually allowed to drive in the states yet.... I guess we should get U.S licenses, cuz I love driving loads.

CAN/DO ALL OF YOU SLEEP IN THE VAN?

I find it the hardest to sleep in the van - the lads fall asleep really easy, but I have a hard time. I just end up sitting, and thinking about certain guys. I just listen to tunes mostly...

ANY INTERESTING SLEEPING STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, I.E. DREAMS, SEX, ETC.?

Well, somehow we always end up with random girls that come and stay in our hotel, which is always fun and it makes it a bit different. Recently, at a show in Harlow, south England, we all ended up staying at this girl's house and getting ourselves and her and her friend really stupidly drunk... We didn't know at the time that the girl we were staying with was only 15. We had got her totally wasted. It's cool now; we are good friends with her.

DO YOU OR ANYONE IN THE BAND DO THE MAINTENANCE? IF SO, TO WHAT EXTENT?

If so, to what extent? Van maintenance? Like oil

changing and stuff? Well, sometimes we clean the inside....that's about it.

TELL ME ABOUT THE WORST VAN RELATED HORROR STORY, I.E. FIRE, ACCIDENT, HIT A DEER, ETC.

On our last state side tour, our guitar tech Seth was driving.. We were on the freeway going pretty fucking fast, then all of a sudden the traffic in front had stoppèd.. Seth tried to stop quickly enough, but we ended up swerving into the grass verge - we all thought we were going to die.....

DOES THE BAND HAVE ANY VAN RULES? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEY?

Yeah, and some of the rules suck. Firstly, there is no smoking in our van. Also, the lads get really funny about spraying perfume or deodorant whilst traveling, and the CD player is usually ruled by whoever gets there first.

ANY ADVICE FOR THOSE BANDS WHO DON'T HAVE A VAN AND ARE LOOKING TO BUY ONE?

Save all your pennies.....

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DREAM VAN?

Dream Van? Is there any such thing?? I think that our van is pretty pimp.... We'll just leave it at that.

For more info about The Fight, visit:
<http://www.the-fight.co.uk>
<http://www.repossessionrecords.com>

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NOW ON TOUR WITH LAMB OF GOD



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THE CATTLE

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ROSES ARE RED
CONVERSATIONS

ON TOUR NOW WITH
BOYSNIGHTOUT & EMERY

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THE HAZE OF INFATUATION

IN STORES 2.8.05

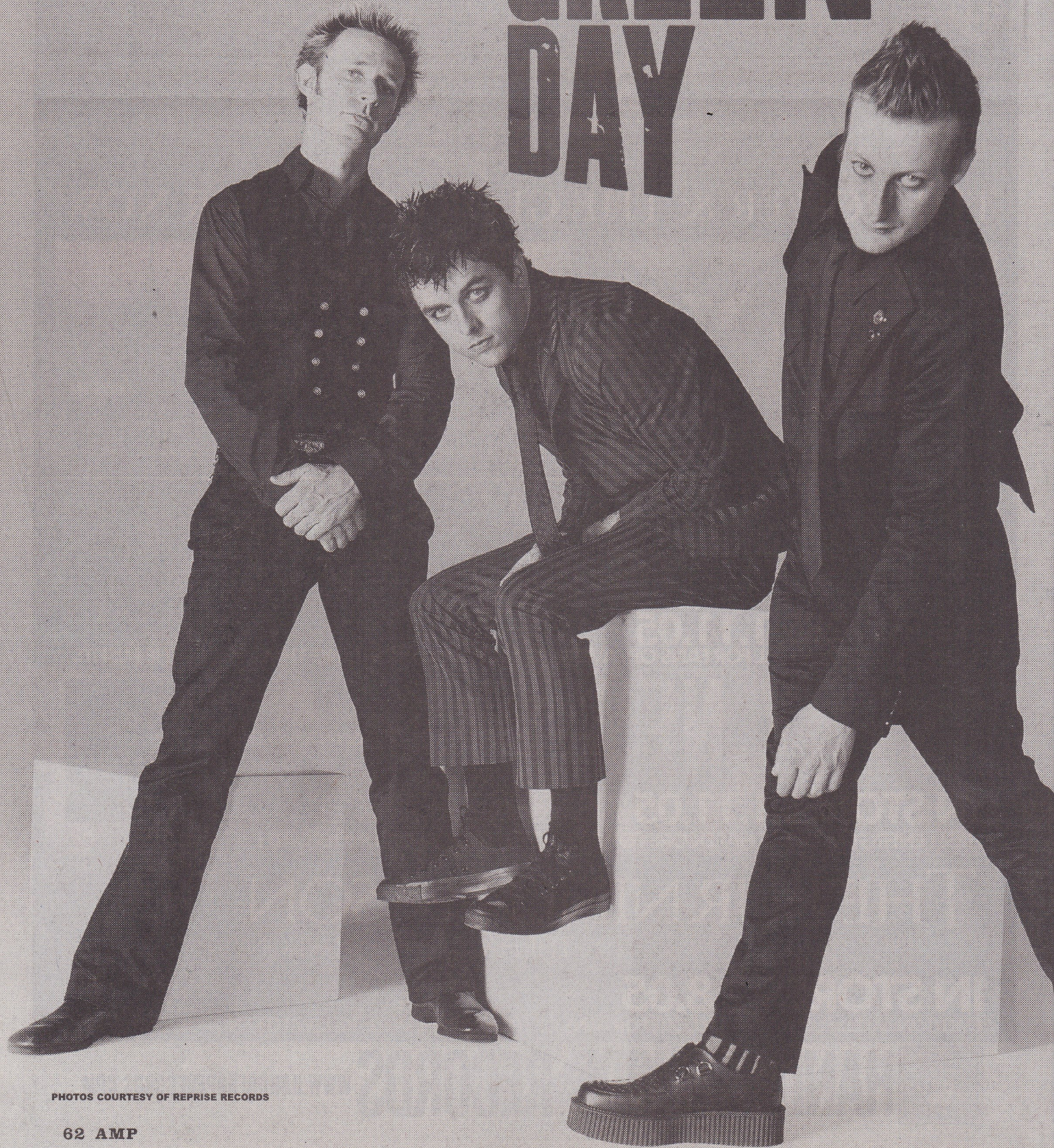
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GREEN DAY



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By Steve Baltin

Back in February of 2004, Green Day frontman Billie Joe Armstrong took a break from recording *American Idiot* to front the L.A. super-group Camp Freddy – consisting of Dave Navarro, Matt Sorum, Donovan Leitch, Chris Chaney, and Billy Morrison – for two songs, Iggy Pop's "Search and Destroy" and the Ramones' "Blitzkrieg Bop," at an industry party. Backstage, after the set, Armstrong gave a little insight into what the band was striving for on the new record.

"We're just trying to get one thought through the album, something that's consistent with the other songs. Hopefully there will be a consistent theme through the whole thing," he said at the time.

Armstrong and band mates Mike Dirnt and Tre Cool not only succeeded in finding a unified theme throughout the new album, the trio, with the help of longtime producer Rob Cavallo, single-handedly

resurrected the concept album, a long-dormant and under-appreciated staple of rock history. The ambitious *American Idiot* joins an elite list of albums, such as The Who's *Tommy*, Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, and The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*, that successfully weave a narrative through music.

I spent some time with the trio at the famed Capitol Records' studio in Hollywood,

where they were recording *American Idiot*, in May of this year. Sitting under the watchful eyes of photos of Sinatra, the Beatles, and Beach Boys, the latter two of whom could be considered, along with former Pink Floyd leader Roger Waters, the true auteurs of the rock 'n' roll concept album, the band spoke about the origins of the ambitious opus. "The first song that was written for it was 'American

Idiot,'" Armstrong recalled. "We wrote a bunch of songs before, but 'American Idiot' came up and it just sort of sat above everything we were doing at the time and we said, 'Everything's gotta be this good.' And then one day we were just sort of screwing around in the studio, we all had stuff to do, and Mike wrote thirty seconds of a song just for fun, as a joke, and then I was like, 'That sounds pretty good. That could sound like a rock opera,' so then I wrote 30 seconds."

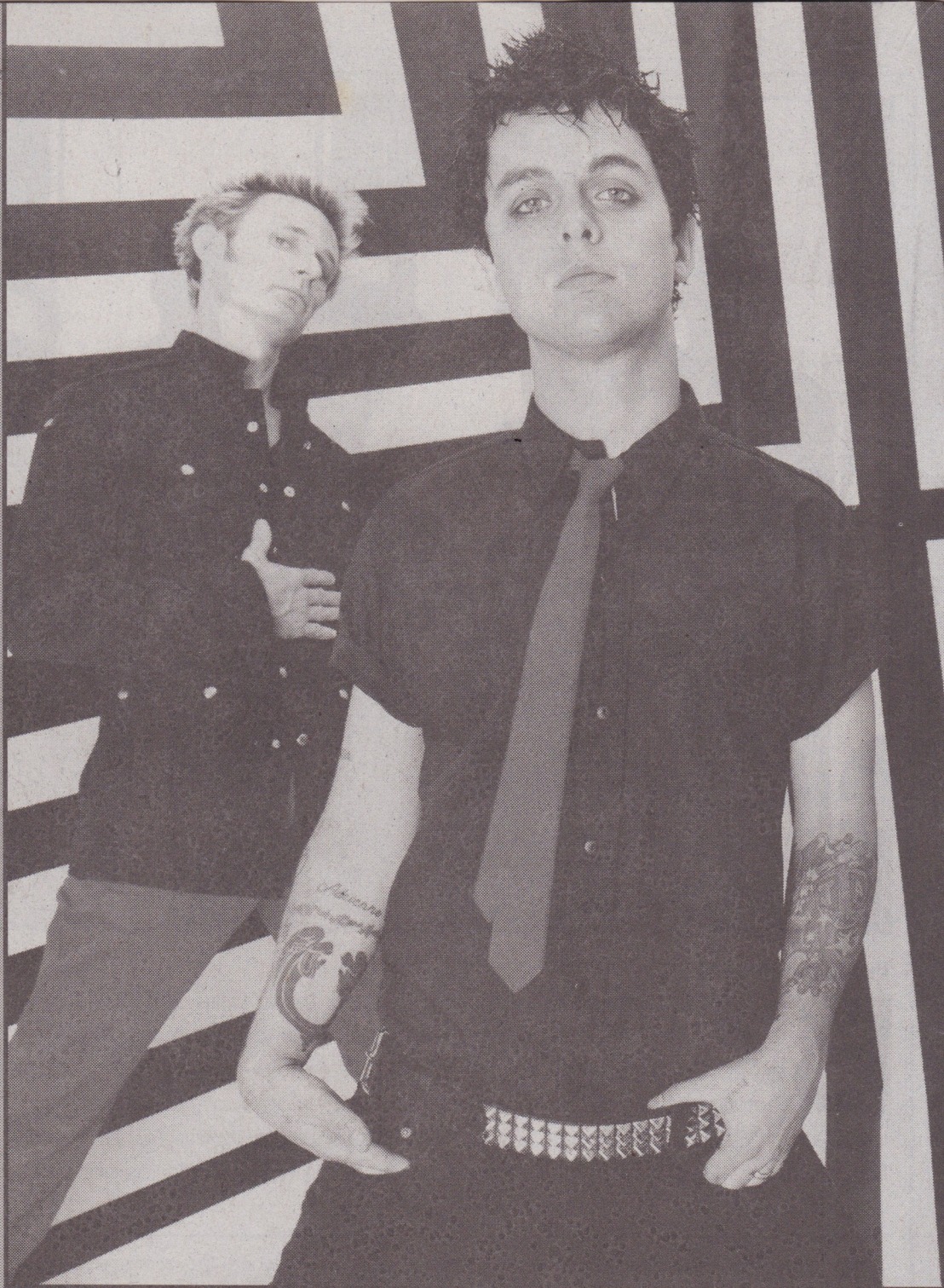
At this point Dirnt jumped in with his own memory of how it happened. "The quote was, 'That sounds fun. I want to do one,'" he says. "It just kept evolving and we were like, 'This is really fun, creative, ambitious, and inspir-

**Billie Joe
Armstrong on
What Rob Cavallo
Brought to
*American Idiot***



"I think a lot of the reason it may have taken us a long time to come out with a record was I would come up with an idea for a song and then an hour later I would convince myself it was terrible. And Rob was great for sort of talking me off the ledge.

'Holiday,' the first time I started fucking around with that song, it took me two months to finish it. I would start it at one point, then I would just go, 'Fuck this, I have no perspective, it sucks, it's terrible,' and now it's one of my favorite songs on the record. Rob had an undaunted faith. He kept saying, 'Just go.'"



ing. Maybe we should go for it."

That 30 seconds turned out to be the beginning of the sprawling nine-minute 'Jesus of Suburbia,' an epic song in five-parts that, if there is any justice, could one day turn out to be punk rock's answer to Led Zeppelin's "Stairway To Heaven."

All three members of the Bay Area group concur that it

was during the writing of "Jesus of Suburbia" that the ante for the album was upped considerably. "The one thing about this record, especially after 'Jesus of Suburbia,' it's so structureless in a way, beyond anything that we've ever done before, it isn't necessarily going to be Side A or Side B. That's when we started thinking in chapters and parts and

thinking about this like a major motion picture or a novel," Armstrong says.

As one would imagine, writing a song in five parts, all with distinctly different sounds, is no easy task. Armstrong recalls the writing of the song. "It was difficult. After 'American Idiot' it was kind of a structure thing. I was just trying to think of what would be the perfect



thing to come after that. It was like, 'I'm the center of rage and love,' of course," he says laughing. "But then I wrote that part, we just kind of kept doing the same thing. Mike ended up writing a part, the next part after that I wrote again, and then it was like, 'Back up a little bit more,' try to see if we can milk this one part.

"Like Tre was saying, there

are a lot of demos involved here. You go through things. A lot of songs stop before you plug your guitar in or before you record it or anything. And part of what we really got a chance to learn the last few years was through fruition, going through the actual song and recording it, it's an ugly and arduous process, you get to the end of the song and you

go, 'Well that sucks, but now I know what it is that I liked about it.' Or you get to the end of the song and you go, 'Fucking A, I had no idea that that was going to be so cool.'"

If Green Day have seemed very confident and comfortable with, as Dirnt, put it, "stepping out of ourselves" on this album, a bold move for a band who'd gone four years between releasing new albums, Armstrong admits there were some nerves behind the cool, calm exterior. "I think there was definitely a fear of this is not going to work because when you get far into a record like that... after you write 'Jesus of Suburbia' there's no turning back," he says. "You have to sort of see it through. You can't just cop out and suddenly go, 'Here's my batch of songs.' You have to keep going. So I think that was the main fear. Sometimes you would look at this sort of mountain in front of you and go, 'Oh my god, I gotta climb this fucker.'"

Going into *American Idiot*, Green Day had already scaled a great deal of mountains; since making the transition from Bay Area favorites on indie label Lookout in the late '80s and early '90, the group had released four straight top 10 albums, won a Grammy, had a surprise crossover hit "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)," which was featured in the last episode of the TV smash "Seinfeld" (how surreal was that?), and single-handedly opened the door for the return of punk rock in the forms of bands like Blink-182, Good Charlotte, Sum 41, Yellow Card, Something Corporate, New Found Glory, and Sugarcult (the latter two

of whom are currently on tour with the band).

In fact, one can argue that Green Day are among the two or three most important rock bands of the past decade, and rank just behind the Ramones, the Stooges, Sex Pistols, and Clash (not necessarily in that order) among the all-time hierarchy of punk rock acts.

With that in mind, the success of the band's track record made the boldness of *American Idiot* an even riskier move. But it has paid off handsomely for the group, with the album debuting at #1 on the *Billboard* Top 200, their first chart-topper since *Dookie* back in 1994.

"We're just honored. We're honored to have this lifestyle," Dirnt said in a recent phone interview.

The success of the album though goes far beyond album sales. Five days before the September 21 release of *American Idiot*, the band debuted the new record by playing it live in its entirety at L.A.'s Henry Fonda Theatre (one of four club shows where they played the album from start to finish). As the band, accompanied by three backing musicians, launched into the title track, which also opens the album, the Fonda exploded into a frenzy of moshing, fist-pumping, and occasional crowd surfing that reached crescendos during more up-tempo songs like "St. Jimmy" and "Letterbomb."

A few days before the show, Armstrong talked about the songs he was most excited about playing, with "Jesus of Suburbia" being right at the top of the list. "'Jesus of Suburbia' I'm really psyched on playing because I think a lot of kids



are going to be witnessing something that they've never seen before," he said.

"'Holiday.' I'm really excited to play the whole thing. 'Extraordinary Girl' I really like playing that. 'Homecoming'... it's just fun to play, especially the nine-minute epics."

After the show, and in the midst of touring, Dirnt talked about gratifying the response has been. "It's been awesome. I like to think we're playing the doors off wherever we go into. It's very much a rock show. People just get it."

Fueled by the energy of the fans and their own love for the album, Green Day promise to make up for the long absences from the road in recent years. "Nimrod was the last time that we really did everything in sort of a one-year period, but I think we're going to end up doing it like that this time. It's just nice to play new material that people are into. We'll proba-

bly end up doing that [playing the album in its entirety] here and there throughout the next year, but we're going to be playing all of our catalogue after that," Armstrong says.

Green Day hasn't shied away from challenges on this album, and one of those potential obstacles, maybe the biggest one, was the influx of politics in the album in a year when musicians have been crucified for speaking out.

But the views Armstrong expresses in *American Idiot* have less to do with supporting a candidate (though let's just say neither he nor Dirnt were celebrating the day after the election) and more to do with the personal side of politics.

"I always try to write from a standpoint about the climate and where I'm at, whether it's a small place or bigger. Writing from a political standpoint it's like you're pissed,

but I didn't really want to have an agenda or make people feel like I'm telling them what to do or come across as a shitty politician. Because of my lack of knowledge about my politics and my confusion about it and I think that's where a lot of people are coming from. Everybody's fucking confused about the climate nowadays. It's like a culture war. And to try to find some human relationship throughout it, like the song 'St. Jimmy' or there's another song called 'Whatchername,' it's a reoccurring girl throughout the whole record. So that's where a lot of it is coming from, is just to try to have that relationship between different people and yourself, but surrounded in total chaos," he explains. The people he looks to as songwriting models in terms of combining politics and the personal side include John Lennon and Joe Strummer.

"Those are the two people that sort of stick out to me the most just because they just have so much conviction in their voice, the way that they sing it," he says. "I've always liked the kind of songwriter that can make a statement, but also have a sappy song about a girl, too." Dirnt wants people to know as well that the tour will not involve a lot of preaching and politics. "It's also a coming of age story. And it's the rise and fall of the American dream. Our tour isn't a giant protest show. It's a rock 'n' roll show," he says.

If early shows are any indicator though, the response to the live shows will be right in line with the early reaction to the album. "The main word or two words that have been coming back is 'Holy shit,'" says Armstrong. That's exactly the rejoinder the band was looking for. "To me, that's a really good response." ■

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NOVEMBER ENTRY:

BANDS REUNITED! AND BREAKING UP...

There's sometimes a bit of cynicism when an old punk or hardcore band from days gone by get back together. So many reunions have seemed tired. Going through the motions, trying to recapture past glories. Middle aged men (and sometimes women) going through a mid-life crisis. Or maybe hoping for one last cash-in.

But, sometimes, a band will get back together for the right reasons—wanting to play again, without any expectations. I reckon that's what brought Finnish punk band Rattus back together. The three original members starting playing again a few years ago and recently completed a short east coast US tour. It almost never happened, as the band just managed to get out of Florida ahead of Hurricane Jeanne—their tour was booked by Sound Idea/Burrito Records honcho Bob Suren and he told me about driving the van while being battered around by 60 MPH winds and how they wisely cancelled their show in Daytona Beach, which was decimated by the storm. Lucky thing... because they were fucking *killer*. Three unassuming looking guys. One of 'em with gray hair and a beard, one of 'em with a shaved head and goatee. Not exactly fashion-plates but WHO FUCKING CARES?!! They got up there and totally raged. Even played some new songs that had the punch and energy of old. The band actually began in the late 70s and some of their early songs had more of a trad-punk/UK inspiration. Eventually, they embraced a speedier attack. That was all on display during their show at AS-220 down in Providence. Many in the audience probably weren't born when the band's records came out in the early to mid-80s but they were thrashing away like crazy, singing along (somewhat) and gave the band a welcome reception. I'm glad I was there. And let's hope that the band follow up on their vow to return to the states.

A band regrouping. A band breaking up. One of the better hardcore bands in Boston, Cut The Shit, have called it quits. They just played a final show at the Polish American Club in Boston. Not that big a turnout and the poseurs missed out because they pulled out all the stops. Frantic, in-your-face hardcore punk with blaze and anger. No acrimony—they're splitting because their guitarist has moved back home and the drummer they've had for the past year or so is also from New Jersey (both of them—Paul and Matt—were in the late, great Tear It Up). They accomplished a lot—toured the US, made it to Europe, put out some ripping records. Hopefully, some of you got to see them. By the way, the day of the show was also their vocalist Andrew's birthday and there was a



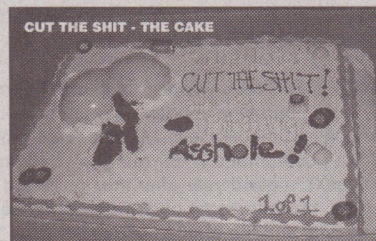
CUT THE SHIT



fitting cake for the occasion.

Check out the photo! Words can't do it justice. Hopefully, the black and white can (it was originally taken in color).

Another reunion coming up. This week, I'm probably going to see the first local show by Jerry's Kids in about ten years. Two original members—vocalist/bassist Rick Jones and guitarist Bob Cenci. The other guitarist will be Ross Luongo, who played in Impact Unit and DYS, so he has the pedigree and the drummer, Jack Clark, played with them in the late 80s, which was the last time I saw them. It's actually for a good reason—former SS Decontrol vocalist Springa was seriously injured in a car accident over the summer and the show is a benefit to help defray his medical bills. Gang Green, who have never completely disappeared (well, Chris Doherty, anyway) are on the bill. So are some other names from the past—early Boston punk band Unnatural Axe, 80s pop bands the Outlets, Prime Movers and Pastiche and some newer bands. Two separate shows and I probably won't see the whole thing because I want to see the Red Sox playoff game... but I don't want to miss Jerry's Kids. People can be cynical, saying they're too old, it's pathetic, etc. but once they kick into "I Don't Belong," I have a feeling I'm going to be temporarily transported back to being 24 years old. Let's hope my 44 year old body can take it. It held up OK at the last Cut The Shit show.



RECORDS, RECORDS, I'VE GOT RECORDS (CD'S, TOO)...

DEAD STOP—Done With You (Deranged, CD)

Keep forgetting to include this review... finally remembered. Dead Stop play rip-roaring hardcore punk, a strong follow-up to their 7" EP. Modern touches merged with a deadly old-school attack. Even a dynamic instrumental segment to end the first side (I'm guessing, because this is a CD I'm listening to) and a Bad Religion-ish guitar line to open "What You Say," although this song has more BALLS than anything BR have done in years. Although I have new glasses, the lyric sheet is kinda hard to read but you hear the pissed off venom in Lino's voice as he spits out the middle-finger sentiments. To borrow a line from an old song, Dead Stop ARE the angry. A sonic wrecking ball. (PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA, www.derangedrecords.com)

KEGCHARGE—Sadistic War Glory (Hardcore Holocaust, LP)

From Tex-ass but probably not about to be invited to the next ZZ Top BBQ (after all, the bearded ones support the liar-in-thief). Kegcharge have a trebly, pounding hardcore sound that rumbles along with brute force. And the lyrics are no less blunt: "God bless america/this land that I love/I stood beside her/and watched her burn." It has that rattling, raging sound associated with the members' other projects, World Burns To Death and Spazm-151. Fancy foldout sleeve with some provocative nazi imagery—which I suppose serves as a commentary about their disdain with the state of affairs in this so-called great nation. You can tell right away, with the Dumbya samples that are mixed into the opening "Blood-Mix-Oil," as well as the aforementioned "God Bless America," "Medal Of Honor" and "Throat Lacerated By Tripwire." You won't see Kegcharge sporting those yellow ribbon magnets, I imagine. If Kegcharge made magnets, I'd proudly sport it on my vehicle. (www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

STOCKHOLM SYNDROME—One Way Out (No Options/625 7" EP)

Seven of the songs from their demo that was recorded in late '02 and it's cool to have them finally committed to vinyl and I hope it's just the beginning. Wailing hardcore—raw, fast and pissed (but with skilled playing), both musically and with the lyrics about gentrification, the punk scene, anxiety and workaday drudgery but "Moments Of Life" offers a bit of an affirmation. Punk keeps them alive. It keeps me alive. This blasts

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away the blues. (PO Box 22285, Oakland, CA 94623, nooptions666@yahoo.com)

SELF DEFENSE-Megaton Punk Disruptor (Wintermute, 7" EP)

Self Defense have been defunct for awhile, having scattered into such bands as Sleeper Cell, Dragzilla, Last Words and Clusterfuck but they've got a posthumous 7" EP out (they had another EP and a split with XFilesX), a good year after they recorded it. Straight-ahead bruising hardcore... but with some cool twists, such as the cowbell that pops up unexpectedly and the Maiden-esque licks for "Samizdat." A scorching finale. (38 Wall St., Valhalla, NY 10505, jeff@gogodragzilla.com)

SCHOLASTIC DETH-Final Examiner (625, CD)

Anthology of all of Scholastic Deth's recordings, plus a few unreleased songs, a radio set and live video from LA in 2002. Spazz/What Happens Next drummer and 625 honcho Max Ward steps out from behind the kit, puts a mike in his hand and rails away, in a high-pitched timbre, on a variety of topics—probing, questioning, celebrating—delving into 'scene politics,' gentrification, employment, all the time assessing what makes him happy. They also extol the virtues of reading, independent bookstores and, first and foremost, skating. Fast, hammering hardcore punk drawing on Infest and Heresy, among others, for inspiration. Double-speed thrash, laden with tons of feedback—that feedback creates the transitions between songs. The booklet is an epic production, befitting self-professed nerds, as there are accompanying thoughts for each song. Positive but also pissed-off and that's a winning combination. (www.625thrash.com)


HONG KONG BLONDE (Ugly Pop, 7" EP)

Crossover thrash-core from the western provinces of Canada. Vancouver, to be specific. Speed-demon drumming, red-hot riffing and firing on all cylinders. Inspired by the likes of Poison Idea, Accused and old Canadian ragers Direct Action—don't expect you to remember the latter but that came into my hardcore-encrusted brain. These guys look as though they've been around the block a bit—in fact, I know they have, but they play with youthful recklessness. (www.uglypop.com)

THE SPARK-Fashion Rats and Status Whores (Mike Fitzgerald, 7" EP)/Less Slow, More Go! (Wallride, 7" EP)

"Fashion Rats" is the second 7" EP in a matter of months for the DC band The Spark. Just like the good old days—10 songs on an EP and no time to catch your breath, as one song fades into another with squalls of feedback. Ripping hardcore with speed, tightness and sputtering guitar volleys. Lyrics are direct and to the point—they ask the "Honest Question" if I promise not to mosh in your church, will you not pray in my pit and, before you've had an opportunity to contemplate that question, they've moved to the anti-authoritarian sentiments of "Eleventy Billion." And a big thumbs up for "Circle Pits Not Karate Kicks" and "Of Course It's A Basement, Stupid," which expresses the true beauty of DIY hardcore. The band's first 7", "Less Slow, More Go!," has the same kind of piledriving energy—10 songs, as well, including a cover of Black Flag's "American Waste." Piling on the adrenalin and, in this yellow-ribbon infested land, "The Flag Shop Is Out Of Stock" is a welcome palliative. (Mike Fitzgerald: 652 Evelyn Ave., East Meadow, NY 11554-5427, www.geocities.com/recorddork/1.html/Wallride: 4401 Ethel Ave., Hampstead, MD 21074, wallridekid@aol.com)

DROPDEAD/LOOK BACK AND LAUGH-Split (Armageddon, 7" EP)

A split and both of these bands feature rabid-sounding vocalists whose braying timbre could peel paint from the walls. Dropdead have been around forever but they haven't released much new material in recent years. Hammering, double-speed thrash, yet not going completely out of control—6 songs in a matter of a few minutes, played with blazing intensity. Look Back and Laugh, who just toured the west coast with Dropdead, follow up their hot LP with three more rippers—loud, pulverizing, uncompromising hardcore punk. One of the better new bands in the US, at the moment. (PO Box 56, Providence, RI 02901, www.armageddonshop.com) 

**DECEMBER ENTRY:
FOUR MORE...**

Motherfucking years... what the hell is wrong with the voting public? If you believe that the election wasn't rigged—and there's a part of me that believes that could be the case, yet again. I've been listening to lefty radio all week and people have been pointing out possible problems with the electronic voting machines. Pointing out that the lines in Ohio were ridiculously long and some polling places were understaffed. Suppressing the vote, particularly in Democratic precincts? Could be, could be.

And 11 states passed legislation that allows blatant discrimination, by outlawing gay marriage. What business is it of anyone who someone marries? Another topic I've been over many times before and the fact that homophobia is alive and well in the good 'ol USA sickens me.

The whole election sickens me. People's self-centered attitudes sicken me. I've been battling back and forth on a message board with one of those free market purists. One of those dickwads who doesn't want his tax money going to pay for government sponsored health care. The 'ol sink or swim mentality. That type of crap drives me into a motherfucking rage, to be honest. Cold hearted selfish motherfuckers.

The next four years are going to be a blast, aren't they? The only thing holding back complete totalitarianism is the fact that the US senate doesn't yet have a super-majority. That means the Democrats can still filibuster and hopefully throw up a few roadblocks in front of the Rethugs' most egregious maneuvers. Such as packing the Supreme Court with right-wing fascists. Bill Rehnquist will likely be stepping down in the coming months and there will also be another few justices who choose to retire. The moderate John Paul Stevens is 84 years old, for instance. How much longer will he serve?

Moral values? That's what people in the red states are voting for? What fucking moral values? Bombing innocent people in faraway places into oblivion? People who had NOTHING to do with what happened on 9/11? And Iraq is just the beginning. What a mess. Over 1000 dead US soldiers and more bodybags coming home every day. Going home mainly to those blue states that supported Bush. Once again—what are they thinking?

What are they thinking when they vote against their own self interest? I've yet to read Thomas Frank's "What's The Matter With Kansas," but that's exactly what his book posits and I've heard him discuss the book on various talk shows and print interviews. As Frank said in a June 14 interview with the Dissident Voice website (www.dissidentvoice.org),

"The reason I say there's something 'the matter' with all this is that, in becoming more and more conservative, Kansas is voting against its own economic interests. Large parts of the state are in deep economic crisis—in many cases a crisis either brought on or worsened by the free-market policies of the Republican party—and yet the state's voters insist on re-electing the very people who are screwing them, running up colossal majorities for George Bush, lowering taxes and privatizing and deregulating, even when these things are manifestly unhealthy for the state."

So why? What's the reason? According to Frank, it is those moral values. The culture wars. He states:

"The cloud of inexhaustible right-wing outrage that hovers over so much of the country. Kansas, like many places in America, once had a tradition of progressivism and outright radicalism. Today, though, like many other places, the state's political center just seems to move farther to the right in response to events. During the Nineties the state erupted in a sort of right-wing populist revolt, tossing out its old-school pragmatic leaders and replacing them with the most conservative Republicans available. It made national headlines when anti-

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abortion activists descended in massive numbers on Wichita in 1991, and it made world headlines when its State Board of Education took up the battle against evolution in 1999. Today Kansas is the sort of place where the angry, suspicious worldview typified by Fox News or the books of Ann Coulter is a common part of everyday life."

That does seem a plausible explanation. It doesn't make me feel any better. Nor want to visit that part of the country any time soon. Massachusetts isn't any utopia. Neither is California. But there does seem to be more acceptance of secular opinion. We're not in the vice-grip of radical religionists, although there are quite a few devout Catholics here in Massachusetts and we're near Gordon College, a wing-nut christian institution of allegedly higher learning in Beverly, a few towns over from where I live. In the 90s, some right-wing christian groups started trying to influence the school curriculum in that town and get rid of topics on sex ed, homosexuality and AIDS (*Boston Phoenix*, 6/18/98). But that seemed to pass. I don't think they teach creationism around here, like they're trying to do in Bible belt states.

There was that map making the rounds after the election, where North America was divided into the United States of Canada, with the blue states from the west, northeast and midwestern states joining with Canada and the rest of the country becoming "Jesusland." You know what—I wouldn't have a problem with that. I know that a lot of those states are more "purple" than blue, that there are people in that part of the country who know what's up, that something's wrong with the current administration. But there's definitely a cultural divide, a different way of thinking. There's another book I want to read, one of these days, written by John Sperling, called "The Great Divide: Retro vs. Metro America." It discusses this divisiveness, two distinct ways of looking at the world and ways for the metros, the more progressive-minded, to gain control. The main way is to forget the retros and not try to compromise with them. Instead, try to reach out to the more-enlightened metros. There's a eulogy for the Democratic party because they did try to somehow appeal to a group of voters who had no intention of voting for them in the first place.

That's why I'm not a Democrat. They've been trying to appease the Republicans by running towards the center. They've lost their way. And it was appalling to see Kerry concede so quickly, without a fight, even with the questions about the fairness of *this* election. He wimped out, pure and simple. Even Al Gore had more fight in him four years ago.

OK, points made. I'm fucking pissed. At least the Red Sox finally won the World Series after 86 years. Even though Curt Schilling got out there and started campaigning for Dumbya. Dumb fucking jock..

AWAY FROM POLITICS... ON TO THE MUSIC...

SLAYER-Still Reigning (American, DVD)

They sure are!!! Drummer Dave Lombardo's been back in the fold for a few years now and that's the only Slayer lineup that ever mattered. When he left, they definitely lost something. Anyway, during the summer, at a show in Maine, Slayer played the entire "Reign In Blood" album in order, in front of an audience of crazed Slay-Maniacs or whatever they call their devoted following. This is the greatest thrash metal album of all time. No argument. You won't win it. No other metal record of the past two decades has come within a mile of matching that 28 minute opus riff for riff. From the opening barrage of "Angel Of Death" to the thunderous conclusion of "Raining Blood," Slayer were the masters of their craft and they absolutely nail it here. Lombardo is the engine that holds it all together, fusing wallowing power with lightning-fast finesse. Whammy-bar madness and the demonically-grinning Tom Araya holding court at center stage. Speaking of "Raining Blood," let's just say, at this performance, the words from that song are made literally visual. FROM A LACERATED SKY!!! Metallic armageddon, my friends. They also include another half dozen songs from the same show and an interview segment. Nope, they're not geniuses and, man, a lot of their fans sure as hell aren't, either. But, bottom line, how can you beat one of metal's defining moments being brought to life? You can't.

CLASH-London Calling: 25th Anniversary Legacy Edition (Epic/Legacy, 2CD + DVD)

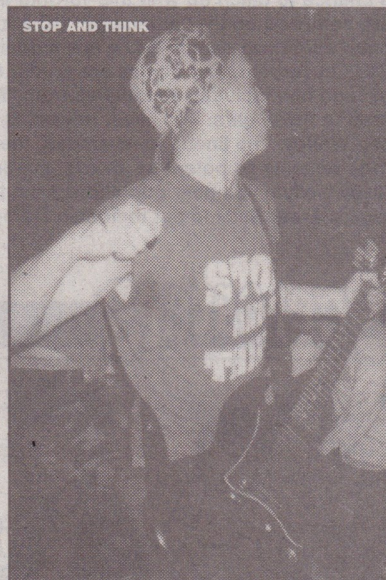
Lavish package marking the silver anniversary (holy fuck) of this canonized album. Sure, mainstream music wags tend to get all weepy when writing about "London Calling." Truth be told, I also get a bit weepy but if you call me emo I'll smack you in the jaw. Weepy, emotional, sentimental because this album meant A LOT to me at the time and still does. It was a stylistic leap from the raw punk of their first album and bombastic, anthemic follow-up "Give 'Em Enough Rope." The "Cost Of Living EP," with "Gates Of The West" and "Groovy Times" indicated they were starting to move on from the self-perceived punk ghetto. Move on they did—although "Lopdon Calling" starts off with the jabbing clarion-call of a title track, strains of reggae, rockabilly, pure pop and jazzy touches punctuate the material here. Even the rousing "Clampdown" shows a leap in songwriting complexity, in maturity. The gorgeous "Death Or Glory" indicates that maturation is part of the equation (the quizzical line "He who fucks nuns will later join the church" hints at that). Not to get all analytical, here. This is a classic rock 'n roll album where the Clash explore the America they obviously became intrigued with during their early '79 tour and likely before that. The second CD is a collection of 'lost demos' recorded at what they dubbed Vanilla Studios. Rough in quality and often works in progress, but you can hear early takes of most of the material that later comprised "London Calling," plus a reggae-inflected cover of Dylan's "The Man In Me" and a few otherwise unreleased songs—the countryish "Lonesome Me," more reggae with "Where You Gonna Go (Soweto), the instrumental "Walking The Sidewalk" and the taut, melodic rocker "Heart & Mind," which as a similar feel as "Gates Of The West" and quotes "Keys To Your Heart" from Joe's old band the 101ers. Finally, the DVD has a half-hour documentary showing the making of the album, including some wild footage with producer Guy Stevens. The stories about him throwing ladders and chair around apparently were true and it's amazing they were able to cobble together such a memorable album with a seemingly-deranged man in the studio. Or maybe that was the secret. All four band members are interviewed (separately) about the making of the album. There are also outtakes from the studio, a video of "London Calling" and live videos of "Train In Vain" and "Clampdown." And the obligatory booklet filled with essays, photos and reminiscences. Pretty much the definitive version and "London Calling" is one of so-called "essential" albums that really *is* essential.

STOP AND THINK-Both Demos (Painkiller/Lockin Out, LP)

Just what it says... both demos by this relatively short-lived Boston hardcore band from a few years ago. Angry, aggressive songs, varying between mid-tempo toughness and thrashier material—the latter is particularly effective for "Up To Our Necks." Inspired by late 80s NYHC (Killing Time, early Madball) and with sharp execution that lifts it above typical mosh-core fodder. (8 Burney St., Apt. 1, Boston, MA 02120, www.painkillerrecords.com)

CONFA FURY/NITZ-Split (Complete Distort, 7" EP)

Two bands that threaten to ride off the fuckin' rails—the Nitz have a new full-length album on Reptilian



AL QUINT

and the songs on this three song EP don't appear on the album. Speedy, slammin' whammo punk thrash in the same vein as Zeke, older Dwarves, etc and including a Scholastic Deth cover (!?). Conga Fury hold up their end of the distort bargain. Trebly, noisy production and a barrage of rockin' rollin' thrashin' feedbackin' speedcore. Head's still spinning. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, www.reptilianrecords.com/completedistort)

2ND CLASS CITIZENS (self-released, CD)

An urgent west coast hardcore sound but reinforced with a good amount of burn and throttle, particularly for the likes of "Consequences & Actions," "Not For You" and "Heartbeat Away." This ain't Hot Topic/Warped swill by any stretch of the imagination. These guys ain't kids either—vocalist Bart Whitehead was in the long-lasting Dread and he brings his former band's "It's Only Suicide" along for another ride here. Burning and passionate. (PO Box 5351, Concord, CA 94524, www.2ndclasscitizens.com)

WITCH HUNT-A War On Reality (Profane Existence, LP)/EP's and Crucial Chaos Radio Session (Profane Existence, CD)

One can hear a decided increase in playing and songwriting ability when listening to these two releases back to back—the title track also appeared on their first EP and, hearing the same song done two years apart, the evolution is pretty obvious and the superior production on the LP doesn't hurt, either. New Jersey trio Witch Hunt evolve from their somewhat primitive crust-core origins into a sound that embraces those elements but adds foreboding melody to the mix. Occasionally, the faster parts devolve into a mono-rhythm but that's less frequent these days. One thing that hasn't changed is their use of the musical forum to express disgust at the world around them—global concerns, as well as issues closer to home—reproductive rights, violence against women and the façade of suburban bliss. The LP includes a huge foldout poster/lyric sheet. The CD features their first 7", a split EP with Deathbag and a live set recorded on WFMU. And while the band were going through some growing pains, the songs are still pretty fucking ass-kicking. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

CAREER SUICIDE-Anthology of Releases 2001-2003 (Deranged/Kangaroo, CD)**CAREER SUICIDE/JED WHITEY-Split (Deranged, LP)**

I've sung the praises of Career Suicide in this space before. Here's a chance to catch up with this Toronto band. Both of their 7"s and LP are compiled on the "anthology" CD and that also includes the band's first two demos and a few hidden live tracks from their set on CIUT in Toronto. The demos are cruder but the sparks still fly and the second one includes soundbites from "Repo Man," which never gets tired to these ears. The latest release is a split LP with Aussie rockers Jed Whitey. The lineup is revamped, the sound a bit brighter but the rage remains as potent as always, starting with "The One That Got Away." While you hear quotations from the FU's and early Poison Idea, Career Suicide put their own stamp on it. As for Jed Whitey, it's

a merger of fired-up rock 'n roll and punk attitude and they really speed it up for the short/sweet "Hey Whitey" and follow that with the fist-pumping, AC/DC-ish "Hands Up If You Think I'm Cool." An older recording and some of the better songs I've heard from this band. (www.derangedrecords.com)

STATE OF FEAR-**Discography (Profane Existence, LP)**

Finally back in print—this album includes State Of Fear's LP and 7"s on one green-colored piece of plastic. A Minneapolis band and one of the vocalists was Massachusetts transplant Jay Stiles, formerly with Disrupt. Aggressive, crusty hardcore with a strong Scandinavian influence from the mid-90s. The earliest material has more of a blatant Anti-Cimex inspiration and that remained with them, but State Of Fear managed to evolve from that without losing their brute force. Two hoarse voices howling out the words of pain accompanied by a bludgeoning attack. Another band I should have paid more attention to a decade ago. (PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

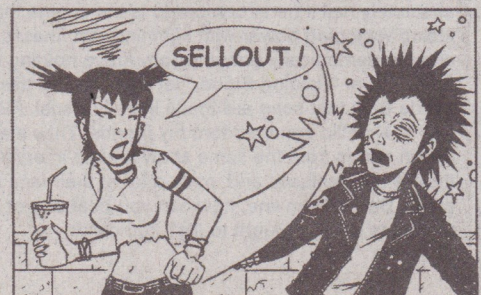
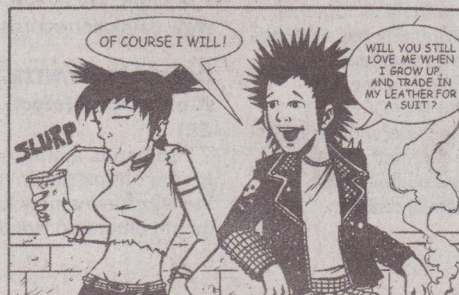
BLOODSTAINS-A Darker Shade Of Black (Ammonia, CD)/Heroin (FNS, 7" EP)

Bloodstains' CD features a gory cover, with cut up writs in a sink and I guess it's fitting for a band with that name. These guys were formerly known as the Dead Outlaws and they feature angry, rough 'n gruff vocals and a sound that embraces hardcore, more melodic punk and rock 'n roll. "Fuck 'Em All" epitomizes their worldview and everything comes together most effectively on this song—loud, raw and catchy. "A Darker Shade Of Black" stomps with boogieified authority. There's also a 7" EP on FNS with completely different tracks. More love 'n flowers with the likes of "Go Fuck Yourself" and the raging leadoff track "Heroin." "Graveyard Shift" captures the aggravation with working in the dead of night and has a smokin' lead break. (www.ammoniarecords.com, www.fnsboston.net)

CAREER SUICIDE



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Salad Days is, in a word, amazing. I can't describe how much of an effect this book has had on me. Nothing else I've ever read has so clearly interpreted the life of a punk, and told it so entertainingly. - *Twenty Inches eZine*

This is a solid read, and anybody with an ounce of passion for what [punk/hardcore] music is all about will have a hard time putting it down. The last few pages actually gave me goosebumps. - *Askew Reviews*

Salad Days is a beautifully told story. I don't think I can come close to doing this book justice in such a short review, but please, trust me, it's fucking fantastic and I can't recommend it highly enough. - *Electrocution Distribution, Australia*

Salad Days thrusts the reader into an emotionally charged reading experience. It is a book I now consider one of the finest I've ever read. - *punkrockreviews.com*

Salad Days is a poignant memoir for anyone who ever believed in the power of music. Romaletti has a skill for character development, dialogue, and rich detail. - *Al Quint, Suburban Voice*

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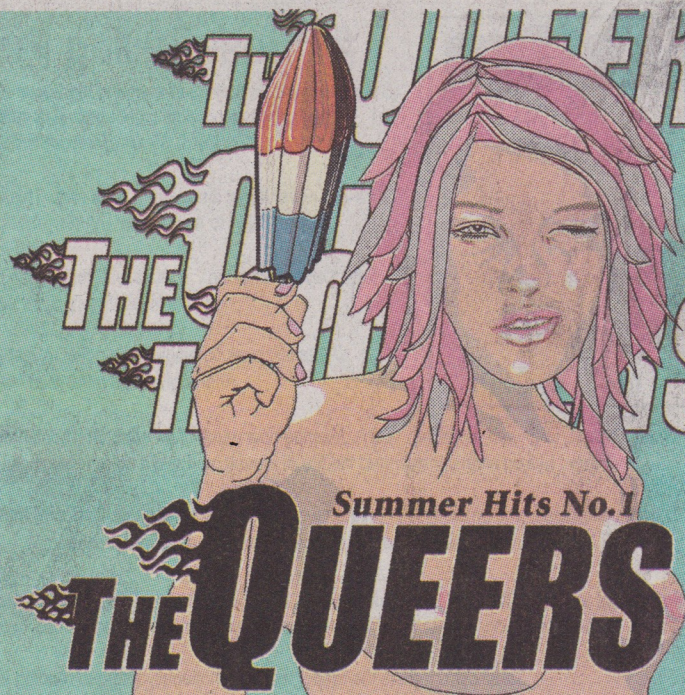
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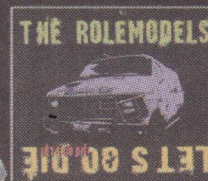
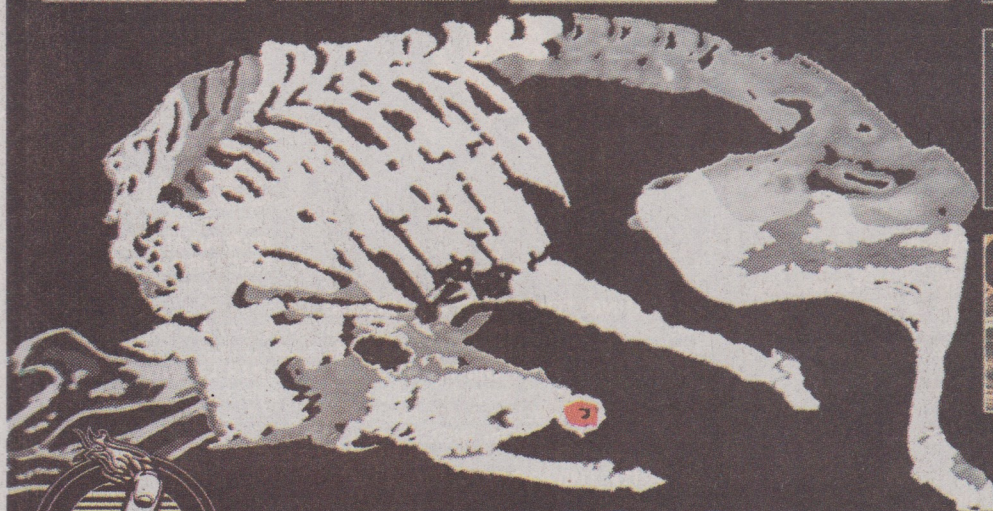
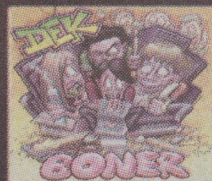
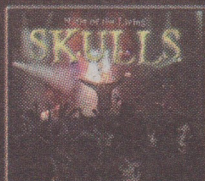
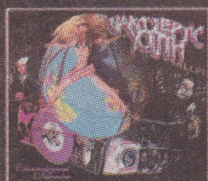
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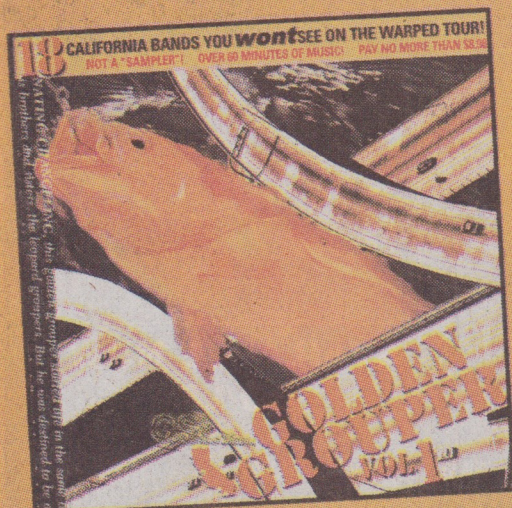


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PROFILE: COLISEUM

By Peewee

NAME:

Ryan Patterson

POSITION IN THE BAND:

Throat, git

HOMETOWN:

Louisville, KY

COLISEUM SOUNDS LIKE:

Lemmy singing for Discharge while Stooges, Turbonegro & Black Flag have a knife fight in the street.

OUR LABEL (LEVEL PLANE) IS COOL BECAUSE:

Level Plane grand wizard Greg Drudy has home invasion paranoia. And also when I found a used condom on the street in Philadelphia, I picked it up with my knife, then rubbed my knife on Greg's shorts and he changed them immediately. He's very clean.

FOUR CD'S THAT ARE INFLUENCING ME THE MOST RIGHT NOW:

Lords, Breather Resist, Kodan Armada, Retisonic.

BEST THING TO DO IN THE VAN IS:

Drive so that you control the CD player or play Scrabble.

WORST DRIVING INCIDENT INVOLVED:

Roadie falling asleep at 7am and driving off the road into a muddy, grassy median. We were stuck and couldn't get out, so some guy with a huge pickup towed us out and told us that the "Lord" told him to stop and help us.

LOUISVILLE HAS INFLUENCED OUR MUSIC IN THE SENSE THAT:

Community is king in Louisville, we support each other and support



local businesses, artist, printers, studios, etc, etc. I couldn't imagine living or doing a band outside of Louisville.

THE KIDS THESE DAYS ARE:

I keep getting older and they stay the same age.

MAXIMUM OR MINIMUM

Maximum.

RIVERBATS OR REDBIRDS:

I don't dig sports.

UPCOMING TOURS OR RELEASES:

Just toured all of September with Breather Resist & Lickgoldensky. Oct with Hot Cross & Suicide Note. More to come.

WHEN WE'RE NOT ON TOUR WE EARN OUR LIVING BY:

Ryan; label dude & graphic designer, Tony; unemployed, Keith; middle school teacher, Matt; construction.

BEST BAD RELIGION DISC:

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FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SHOWS:

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BAND THAT STILL GIVES ME THE CHILLS WHEN I SEE THEM LIVE:

Fugazi

WEB INFO:

www.coliseumsoundsystem.com

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This is a great record."

- Heartattack #36

"...it's nice to see one from the pack take some serious chances."

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Q AND NOT U

By James Miller, courtesy of
Pastepunk.com

Dissonance ebbs and becomes jarring, poignant — the twin guitars tear the air, filling it with vocals, smooth and pleading, "Let's stop this clock from starting/Wrong, the time's spelled wrong." The guitarists nod, their worn guitar necks held outward, moving in unison as the enveloping noise becomes a caress — the warm tones are inviting.

Q and Not U are a rock behemoth. Not quite recognized as such yet, the band has finished a fourteen-month world tour in support of late 2002's "Different Damage." Christopher

Richards, sweating in a button-down shirt and armband, pauses to stare at the audience as he drops his guitar and dives, hands

first, for a bass, placed snugly behind a monitor. Drummer John Davis continues his polyrhythmic beats on a snare and maracas, entrancing yet sure. Guitarist Harris Klahr's steady guitar work flourishes with abrasive, clean shocks and embracing silence.

Q and Not U formed in 1998, a product of the histri-
onic

Washington DC hardcore music scene. The band released its first single, "Hot and Informed," a joint release by DeSoto and Dischord Records, in 2000. The single's cover imagery, the ubiquitous Metro car interior, nearly speaks for the band. The city's reputation for exaggerated post-hardcore acrobatics,

defined by acts like Jawbox and Fugazi, is merely one of the reference points for Q and Not U: with two seemingly perfect albums, 2000's "No Kill No Beep Beep" and "Different Damage," Q and Not U are now defining DC.



PHOTO BY VALERIE SOLES



PHOTO BY SHAWN BRACKBILL

Meeting Richards for the fourth time in the dusty parking lot of Tallahassee's Beta Bar, he is polite. This is not the same Richards who dove into an audience wielding a shovel at 2003's Fort Reno, an outdoor summertime concert series in DC. Richards' freestyling about the current Presidential administration's pitfalls that night resonated to an audience of hundreds of people. Tonight, the Beta Bar is almost empty, holds maybe fifty people.

Richards, earnest regardless, seems shorter than he looks onstage. Wearing glasses and clasping his hands behind his back, he speaks with ease, probably practice. His shirt is neatly complemented by a pinned Black Flag patch. "We grew up in the 'hardcore scene,'" he tells me, "listening to early hardcore like Black Flag, Bad Brains, and Minor Threat." "No Kill No Beep Beep" was a frenzied affair; percussive attacks competing with sheeting guitar noise, angular and smooth. A product of reflection, "No Kill No Beep Beep" was nearly a culmination of past DC musical efforts.

"Of course, we were really into what was happening in DC in the 90's: Nation of Ulysses, Slant 6, the Make Up, Circus Lupus and Lungfish. Those were our formative experiences," Richards remembers, "but when the band started, we began listening to more dance music."

Richards, hands becoming expressive, is rocking on his heels. Dust covers his black Converse sneakers. He smiles and laughs. "I might be making a stretch here but when we started, there was a radio format that was really popular - Jammin' Oldies. A real popular format that played nothing but Disco; it exposed us to a lot of dance rhythms. We found out about Afrobeat music, like Fela Kuti and Tony Allen. Now it's wide open. Harris is into free-jazz and avant-garde composers. John really loves power-pop and traditional American folk bands. I like a lot of early 90's hip-hop and Brazilian/Tropicana music."

The departure of bassist and founding member Matt Borlick, shortly after the release of "No Kill No Beep Beep," left Q and Not U visibly strained during performances. Live shows became problematic, as the band struggled to remain a three-piece. Time changes and dynamic shifts were no longer seamless. Shortly after the release of "No Kill No Beep Beep," Q and Not U looked visibly pained during performances. Live shows were problem-

atic, as the band struggled to remain a three-piece. Time changes and dynamic shifts were no longer seamless. Richards moved away from the guitar to become the band's primary bass player. A new sound emerged - raucous distortion was replaced with clean guitar tones - and bass lines became more prominent. The band's original compositions were re-worked; Klahr's subtle inclusion of keyboards and samplers into performances was revelatory; older songs proved to be only templates for a more danceable Q and Not U.

"There is more concentration on the rhythm section. We've begun to experiment with our writing process - it's real loose. It blossoms from us just playing together for hours on end. Sometimes John will have guitar parts and Harris will play the drums - we have no formula. The real labor is organizing songs into actual songs rather than non-linear jam parts, more than just riffs."

Both of the band's albums, released on Ian Mackaye's Dischord Records, bear Mackaye's distinctive stamp. Recorded with Mackaye and Don Zientara at the famed Inner Ear Studios [in Washington], Different Damage served as a breakthrough for the band. "Ian always has tons of suggestions and tons of ideas. It was good to work with him, a real strong personality in the studio. He helped push us to the limit, bringing out the best in us."

The clean production reveals a more accessible album, like a modern Gang of Four. Davis' remarkable percussion, further refined and accelerated, grounds the band. Vocal melodies, nearing the Beatlesque on "Snow Patterns," clash with dense, screaming arrangements on "Black Plastic Bag." These songs [push the album beyond the merely] memorable, ensuring its power. The first three tracks - "Soft Pyramids," "So Many Animal Calls," and "Air Conditions" - merge to create a medley of Dub- infected post-punk. The short shots of bass shudders and Klahr's guitar work are expansive, fused with keyboards, electronic woodwinds and rock steady breakbeats.

Live, the band expands on a single note, reshaping shorter songs into dance anthems. The audience, always moving, frames the band in photo flashes. Davis is unstoppable, never pausing while Richards and Klahr simply inherit the stage - its small borders are ritualistically tested. The pair share guitar duties, while Klahr plays a domineering keyboard

and Richards' instrument rotation features bells, chimes, small keyboards and the bass.

Vocals are simply another instrument. Richards' relatively straightforward phrasing is met by Klahr's screams. The lyrics are sometimes abstract: "New sonic reduction's barely staid/Who has the nerve to sing la la la?" they sing on "This Are Flashes, the lyrics a brief still life, an attack on everything from fashion, post-modernism, belt way politics and the ever expanding suburbia.

The new single contains one of the band's strongest songs to date. "X-Polyination" flirts with vocal effects, distorted bass and decidedly funky guitar. "The lyrics on the new single are a little more explicit - they tie into what is happening in the world right now. The new single is informed by recent situations in the world, a reaction to what is going on in the political arena. It wasn't a conscious decision, but I feel playing music is a response to what's going on around you in the world. I mean, the Bush administration is a complete embarrassment and dangerous abomination."

"Time is ticking for George W. Bush. He's doing an effective job with his attack ads on Kerry, but when it comes down to crunch time, I think Bush's deplorable record will be hard for voters to overlook. I don't think Kerry is a prince, but this election is so unique, in that choosing a lesser of two evils is justified and critical. We're going to be in very sad shape if we let this brat get another 4 years in office."

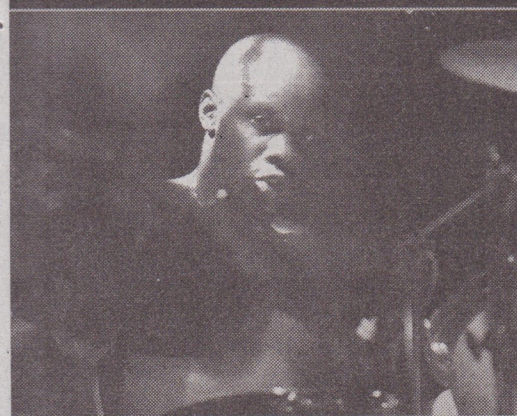
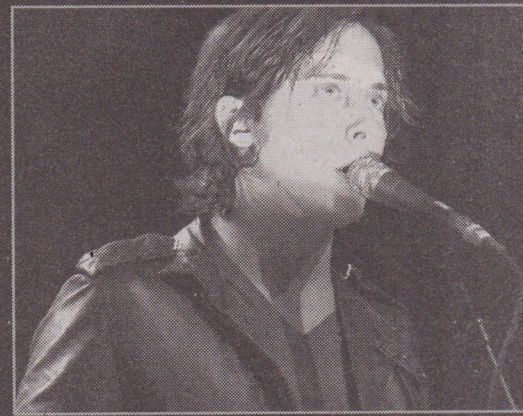
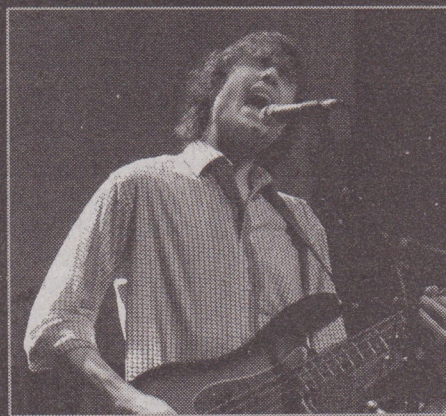
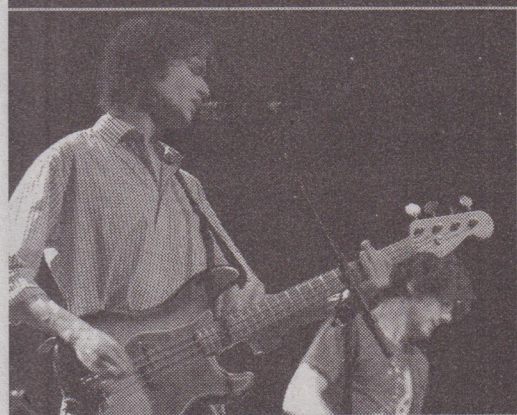
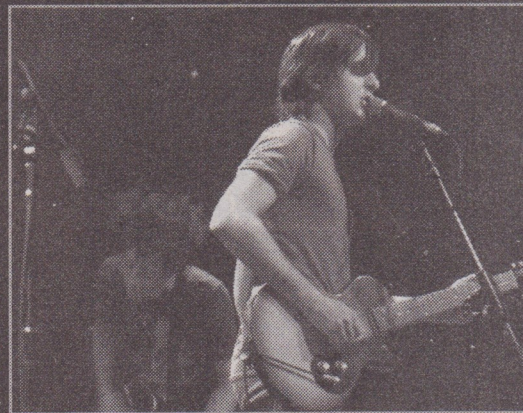
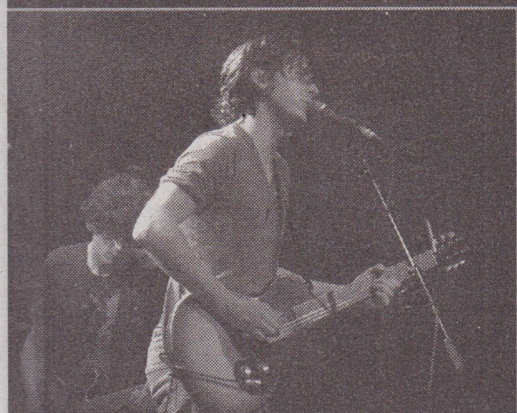
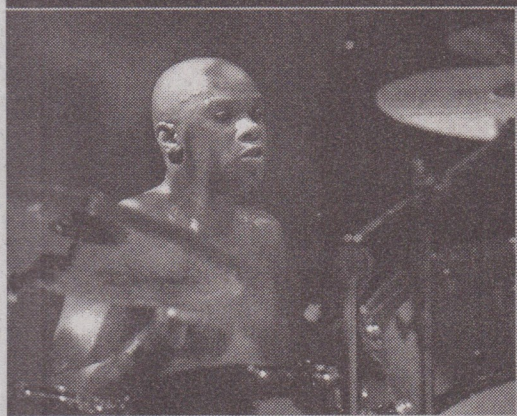
"We're trying to tell people we're not children - we're citizens of this country. If you're 18 years old, you can vote. You have a choice, and all these problems that these guys are fucking creating to put more money in their pockets, it's creating debt and a horrible legacy for us to inherit. We're trying to fire people up without preaching to them. People are really relaxed and they don't realize how dangerous the situation is. It's really important to go out [and vote] in 2004. Get this fucker out of town."

Surrounded by touring vans, Richards is hopeful. The summer will see the band playing across the world, visiting UK and South Africa before recording in DC in August (*all of which already happened in grand fashion - Ed.*). "We try not to be too self-conscious. We love Washington, the music we grew up with. We want to be a great band, to try our best, which might sound incredibly cheesy." ☞

THE LIBERTINES

LIVE AT THE FILLMORE, SAN FRANCISCO

PHOTOS BY JOHN JOH



COMMUNIQUE



Communiqué is an incredible band from Oakland, California, one of the cities that make up the East Bay, a group of cities, towns and suburbs east of San Francisco. Since the late 1980's when the now legendary Gilman Street Project first opened it's all ages volunteer-run punk rock doors, the East Bay has been the starting point for a number of successful and important punk rock bands. The area itself has somehow managed to stay off the mainstream radar, even while local bands like Green Day, Rancid and AFI have become international success stories. Maybe it's because on the surface, the East Bay is mostly uncharming. It's not sophisticated or intriguing like its neighbor to the west, San Francisco. Berkeley, Oakland, and the surrounding cities' suburbs, slums and industrial areas aren't exactly seductive. Despite that or maybe because of it, the East Bay is where some of the best underground music in America just seems to happen.

Communiqué is one of those happening East Bay bands. These five friends cut their teeth in the East Bay punk scene in bands like American Steel and Amscray, bashing on their instruments and singing their hearts out at Gilman, in someone's backyard, a warehouse or the occasional San Francisco show. One thing that has

always set bands from the East Bay apart is a willingness to abandon established rules in pursuit of something more honest, more real. In music, that daring spirit can be a blessing or damnation. Defying genre to make music that is truly your own can win the minds and hearts of loyal fans but you risk obscurity and indifference. With

two releases, the six song EP "A Crescent Honeymoon" and their recent debut album "Poison Arrows," Communiqué have taken such a risk with powerful results. I've been able to watch this band develop since they formed in late 2002 and have always been impressed by the way they work as a band. Recently I had the opportunity



Photo By Piper Ferguson

to sit down with singer-guitarist and songwriter Rory Henderson, bass player John Peck, guitarist Ryan Massey and keyboardist Cory Gowan in the hopes of getting them to open up about discuss how Communiqué operates. Here's what I found out.

How did Communiqué come together?

Rory: Basically I think "why" is more important and I think it was to create a clean slate for everybody. To start a band where the premise is there's no premise.

So there's no premise to Communiqué?

Rory: No, I mean maybe it develops it on it's own organically; but there wasn't a conceptual premise. You know what I mean; it was like a

clean slate. Anything goes. We can play anything we wanted, just jettison all of that stuff.

Ryan: As far as how we actually came together to where we are now, Rory and Jon and I basically did the first EP ourselves with a studio drummer and Rory playing most of the keys. A friend came in to do some piano stuff for us. We did that to get the band going and then got Jamie and Cory into the band. That's how it really became the band that's Communiqué now.

Do you think that going into the studio and making the EP you came out of that experience with an idea of what the band would be?

Rory: Yes, totally.

Ryan: It was almost like us demo-ing

what the band was going to be.

John: That record was the band at that point.

Ryan: What are we going to do? We went in the studio and we did something and then we found a guy that liked it enough to play keyboards for us. We took that energy and convinced Jamie he should play drums for us.

Rory: A lot of the stuff on that EP was kind of done on the fly. The songs were written but the first song on it was written that week. I think I put that keyboard line down just because I had it set up for another song. It wasn't actually supposed to have a keyboard part on it.

Ryan: That whole EP we just threw together with me recording most of it and somebody else mixing. And then convincing Lookout that it was

worth putting out to the world. The touring is then what galvanized the band. OK now we're really a band and people believe us; let's start writing a real record. Not that I don't love that record. I like those songs but this is sort of the band as a finished statement. That was just an idea.

You were incredibly active on the road in support of an EP. How important touring is to you guys and why you think it's important.

Rory: I think all of us are used to touring a lot. What else are you supposed to do with half your year? Going into the studio was kind of figuring out what we were going to be like. Going on the road was too. Like a kid getting out of college and traveling, you know, "go find yourself." So we did. We played a lot of shitty shows and played some good ones. We played a lot of shitty shows; we played some without a keyboard.

Really?

Rory: Yeah, there were some gritty moments, but I think that's good. When you have a new band it has to develop its soul over time. The band can't have it's own soul until you do those type of shows.

Ryan: And we had to convince everybody, from people that were kind of interested in the band, to our label, to ourselves, that we were actually going to do this. Touring is what, as far as I'm concerned, makes you a band.

Cory: Now with Jamie and I in the band we can play these songs live and make them sound good. Touring is the best way to learn how to really play together so that when you go in the studio, it's not like you're introducing yourself to your drummer for the first time.

Ryan: And you don't know what our secret looks mean.

Your band is called Communiqué, which is defined as "an official announcement." What are you announcing? Are your songs meant as stories or messages? Is there a political element?

Rory: The songs are stories but they're pretty devoid of any politics although there are personal politics in there.



Photo By Eve Ekman

How do you define personal politics?

Rory: It's sort of for lack of a better phrase.

Is it social politics?

Rory: Not social politics exactly but the actual tactical manipulation of one another.

John: Of people, rather than politics.

Rory: There's no social commentary on it, I just mean the way people interact.

So, kind of a story?

Rory: It's a story, albeit a sad one. It's supposed to be a little self-deprecating.

I can see that.

Rory: There is no big statement with the name Communiqué. There's no message statement but there is a focus on trying to be more expressive than anything I've ever done before lyrically. It may seem less tangible - like politics - but more expressive. Lets people in more.

That's really interesting. All of us here come from a punk background. It seems that music that has its origin in punk or the punk idea and grows beyond that becomes more vague or broader in what it is communicating. At the same time that music may contain more striking emotional exposure. More expressive but less specific.
Rory: That's true. W you're writing

stuff, you self edit. I think you can self-censor yourself too much. The types of things people censor from day to day; your sexuality or your gallows humor; maybe it's suicidal tendencies or addiction; things that you would censor out of conversation except with those closest to you. And maybe not even them. Why not let that come through? People may have to read between the lines because it's a more poetic than yelling at someone.

John: It's also the difference between being a twenty two year old ideologue and someone older, more worldly and maybe a little more weary.

Rory: It's not world weary, though. It's living room floor weary.

This for a punk magazine so there is something important to touch on as a point of context. I listen to your music and definitely feel it is expressive. At the same time it's the kind of expression I can personalize. It's not so rigid or literal as opposed to songs you guys wrote and performed in the past that were more straightforward and political in content as opposed to personal.

Rory: There's an emphasis on mood rather than statement.

About the songwriting, what is your process like? How has it developed and what music inspires you?



Rory: The process can vary from the song but we try to keep it as organic as possible.

What does that mean?

Rory: I usually don't even have anything. It's all by memory usually. I do tend to write a lot. At any given time I have about thirty songs in my head, different parts and things. My theory is to be Zen about it. I don't write it down. I don't think. I let it stew in my brain figuring the song will rear its head when it makes sense.

Have you lost things?

Rory: I'm sure I've lost a lot. Just the other day a melody was in my dream. I woke up and was a little groggy, trying to figure out what the fuck it was. I had the melody in my head and I was going to sing along, I was going to play some chords on

my guitar underneath. I got up really fast to do it and I picked the wrong key on my guitar and that threw everything off. So I lost it. Often I'll come up with melodies at the most inopportune times. Usually it's melody first and the lyrics just kind of fit into a cadence with the way the melody is going. At that point, the tempo is already decided. The chord arrangements are going to fit under that melody in a way that feels right and from that point you've got to figure a dynamic with the rest of the group and where you want the song to go stylistically.

Ryan: And then start the rewrites.

You are extensive in your rearranging and rewriting of songs.

John: We can be. There are songs that are rewritten a million times. Ryan: There have been songs that come in one way, are finished in



Photo By Piper Ferguson

basically like an hour and stay that way forever. But there have been songs that have had three different choruses too.

What causes you to revisit songs? Is there something that happens by playing it live or is it something you hear rehearsing a song?

Rory: It's buyer's remorse.

John: Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

Rory: Some songs I try to keep flowing and organic. The most beautiful songs are the ones that you just have like your Part A and your Part B - however the arrangements are. Maybe there's three significant parts with transitional moments and dynamics. They follow each other, one after the other, and it's linear and it makes sense. It's a perfect and beautiful thing that wrote itself.

Then there are ones where you think,

"that's a great hook," or, "that's a great line," "that's a great verse," and you sit with it for a long time. Until you're tempted to smash it up with something else. That's going to be shit. You have to come back to it knowing you were being hasty. You didn't let it breath and be itself.

John: The rewrites we do have a tendency towards efficiency. It'll often shorten the song. When we demo'ed last year and then listened to it, we realized that some of the songs were close to seven minutes. Maybe the song didn't need that third bridge.

Rory: Screenwriters write the same way. People writing books write the same way. You just write as much as you can and then you cut it down. You film a movie for four hours and cut it down to an hour and a half. The fact that I don't have all the editing done before I bring the song to everyone is good because everyone

gets a chance at the song.

Ryan: Everyone gets a chance to suss out what's working and what isn't. That's something both playing live and demo'ing are great for.

Seeing you guys live, you get a sense of everyone in a song, each member's contribution.

John: A lot of bands have problems when there is a primary songwriter, the other members either not taking any interest at all or doing the opposite and getting defensive about their ideas for a song. It can become bitter, sectarian, like musical war within the band...

You don't have that?

All: No.

Ryan: Everyone does have equal input into where a song can go and no idea is a dumb idea. All of us feel comfortable saying whatever we

think and know we're not going to be criticized. Ninety percent of the time, your idea isn't going to fly anyway. Oftentimes people get married to a bad idea because it was their first. They get into a position of defending it without even liking it necessarily. The instrumentation is more orchestral where no one part is super radical, you know? Like "I'm going to play killer guitar parts the whole time." There will be songs where everyone is playing one boring part three quarters of the song and the other part they're not playing at all. The parts seem boring but when you put them all together they're symphonic and it sounds great.

John: Along those same lines, everybody in the band also has a nook they fit in to. We aren't really at war about being the lead person. We know where we fit in and it makes life easy. Everybody knows where they fit in and it makes the machine work.

I agree that there are bands that don't keep that in mind. It's a very good quality. Do you feel like there was any kind of reference points - either specific influence or inspiration - when it comes to

Communiqué, in terms of the album, Poison Arrows, or individually? Cory, do you feel like your parts are inspired by something specific? I'm curious because you aren't a band that wears its influences on its sleeve. You have created a very unique voice.

Rory: This album and our EP are boxy. These are pop structures. They are all three to four minute songs within a standard pop structure with their own flair. Concise. Lay it dense and concise. My own influences when we were starting out were musicians we sound nothing like. Jazz musicians or art rockers or alternative rock bands that we don't sound anything like. Blur or something like that. Blur always do what they want and come out with something different every time. It's inspiring to see that it can be done. The love of music can be first and foremost.

Continuing this theme, the songs on your debut album, Poison Arrows, demonstrate incredible instrumental textures. What are

we hearing? Did that make the record difficult to record or mix?

Rory: That's the fun part. We get to talk about the toys. There's a lot of layering going on. There's a tricky way you can do guitars to make the guitars over-tone on each other to sound like an organ almost. We spent a lot of time fine tuning the over-tones to make sure we were getting them right, trying things different ways to see how it would mesh with the guitars. We used a lot of hard synths and soft synths so we got a lot of wide variety of sounds but many of them are just sort of support role sounds.

How did you go about picking those sounds, was it trial and error process or did you have something in mind?

Rory: Well we had stuff in mind but a lot of it was trial and error getting a lot of the stuff especially on the soft synths just finding the right tones and fucking with them a little bit...

Ryan: Many times we went to the soft synths when after the hard synths you wanted didn't work. We couldn't get the right sound so we'd end up going through 60 different patches and tweaking them 30 different ways and putting them through distortion pedals.

Rory: There's also this sort of vinyl collector, vintage equipment mentality. The real thing has so much better sound than using the computer. We would try them because we are kind of vintage gear guys. Then we'd shrug our shoulders and say it sounds like shit. You have to defer to what it sounds like and use modernity to your advantage.

Ryan: As far as the overall mix of the record goes, there's an average of seventy tracks on each song but we don't want it to sound like there are 70 tracks. Most of those songs were played for months on the road before they were recorded. A couple of the songs on the EP we had never played live before we recorded them. Those songs were really hard to replicate live later. This was capturing idealized versions of songs we knew well from the road. We have had to change them a little after recording them to make them sound like the album. That was a matter of fine tuning and not having to completely start from scratch.



Photo By Eve Elman

Rory: The backwards way to go is to try to sound like your record. But that's funny cause that same show in LA I heard a couple comments and the only critique they had of our set was that we sounded too much like the record, I felt like I was watching the record and I was like 'that's rad!' Wow we did it. That's the way it's supposed to be in this day in age of studio gangstas, so yea we do pull a lot of tricks in the studio but we do back it up live and replicate it.

So was it hard to mix then?

Ryan: Yea it was hard to mix but it was fun. It was hard to mix because there was so much raw data and we had to start thinking, "OK, that really cool part is awesome but it doesn't belong in the front of the mix. It's a background part."

Rory: I call it guitar jenga.

You definitely have a unique and singular voice musically and that is a combination of the energy of punk and melodic rock. I know that that's a nebulous term but -

Rory: Pop rock has been made to be a dirty word but the Beatles were the first pop rock band. It's not necessarily a bad term.

That's true. And there's a sheen and a sophistication to what you're doing and with so much keyboard texture and synthesizer sounds, one can't help think of bands like Kraftwerk or New Order. There are other current bands mining similar sources. Unlike many current bands that are incorporating keyboards, you have created danceable music without the disco. How do you see Communiqué in context of bands like The Faint and The Rapture?

Rory: We're more of a song band. I think The Faint are rad but they're super stylized. There's a lot less rock and roll involved even though I get a punk vibe off them. They're dynamic and hooky but we're more structural - like a stereotypical introduction, body paragraph, conclusion thing. I joke about how as soon as you have a keyboard player or any type of non-string lead and rhythm instrument that people want to reference you to the new wave thing or back to the 60's Beach Boys thing. Instead of referencing everything that way - saying there's a resurgence of bands utilizing keyboards - I think there was a period where people were really boring and decided not to use keyboards. For like ten years in

the 90's people were too stuck on grunge and punk. But if you look at rock and roll history there was less time than that 10 or 15 year period where people were using piano and keyboards. The keyboard has finally come home to rock and roll because rock and roll sucked.

Cory: I can't see many new bands using synths and a big B-3 on the same song and having it work. That's one of the things I like this band. We can do that and make it sound natural and not make it freaky. I can't picture The Rapture busting out a big organ tone.

Being from the San Francisco Bay Area do you feel that your environment, where you're from plays a role in this band? Either historically - coming out from the punk scene around Gilman Street - or San Francisco as the birthplace of underground rock and roll? Does where you're from play a role in your music?

Ryan: It's a strange triangle we've always lived in. There's the progressive college town, Berkeley; the urban, blue collar Oakland; and then, San Francisco. There's a history of folk and protest music coming out of Berkeley. Oakland has got a great



Photo By Eve Ekman

history of blues, rap, funk and punk - gritty styles of music. And San Francisco has a heritage of 60's rock. I think we also bare a lot of resemblance to the things that happened in New York where like there's a sort of grittier, underground, art and music scene going on.

Rory: When people ask me where we came from I can't help but thinking about mid-90's Oakland parties. It was punks on bikes, going to parties, showing up and listening to Motown or new wave, getting wasted, making out with someone, going home to your shitty punk house and then waking up the next day to go to your shitty café job. I don't know why it was a surprised when new wave got popular again because we were listening to it when we were like kids and it was funny to just go to a party and have the DJ play that stuff.

Ryan: Suddenly it was OK. All these punk kids who were so punk. And then you go to a party and everybody is listening to the Go Go's, dancing on tables. That's cool.

Maybe there's a point where it goes from it being cool to listen to being cool to actually play.

Rory: It did. It took like 5 years. I

remember talking with Jim Nastic about starting a project when I was in American Steel and he was in Black Fork. I said, "we should start something that's like R'n'B - take Motown, some disco and punk into something like... dance punk!" And he's said, "Yeah, dance punk! We'll play parties, get wasted and play dance punk!" It didn't go anywhere because at the time it seemed stupid. Low and behold, five years later it's on the covers of magazines.

How does the work of this band break down between the five of you?

Ryan: Everyone falls into a role that fits their strengths. There will be times when we're getting ready for a tour and my mom asks me why a certain job falls on my shoulders. I tell her, that's what I do in the band. John has always been the treasurer because he's good at it. If I were doing it, everything would be in my back pocket falling out all the time. I'd spend it all on drinks and everyone would be pissed at me. Rory deals with the ideas of what we're going to do and like where we should be going; I deal with equipment management, vans and stuff like that. We all have our little get-

in-where-you-fit-in thing.

John: It's true everybody does their own little part.

Cory: Seeing these guys on the road the first time we went out, I was clambering for something to do and everything was already covered. Now I just try to do what I can.

Ryan: Cory's picked up a lot of the tour managing stuff, some of the web stuff and advancing shows.

What about Jamie?

Rory: Jamie keeps the beat and stays mellow. That's what we count on him to do.

You all come across as well read intelligent young men. What besides music has a bearing on your band? Cinema? Literature? Do they play a role at all?

Ryan: I can say this and I think I speak for most of us. Music isn't our whole universe. We don't like that much music. What I mean is we have a lot of other interests.

Rory: Yeah everyone brings their own personal interests to the band. Ryan and John are definitely better read than me but I'm a history fanatic and take a lot from history. Unrelated things, but it's part of how I lyrically voice -

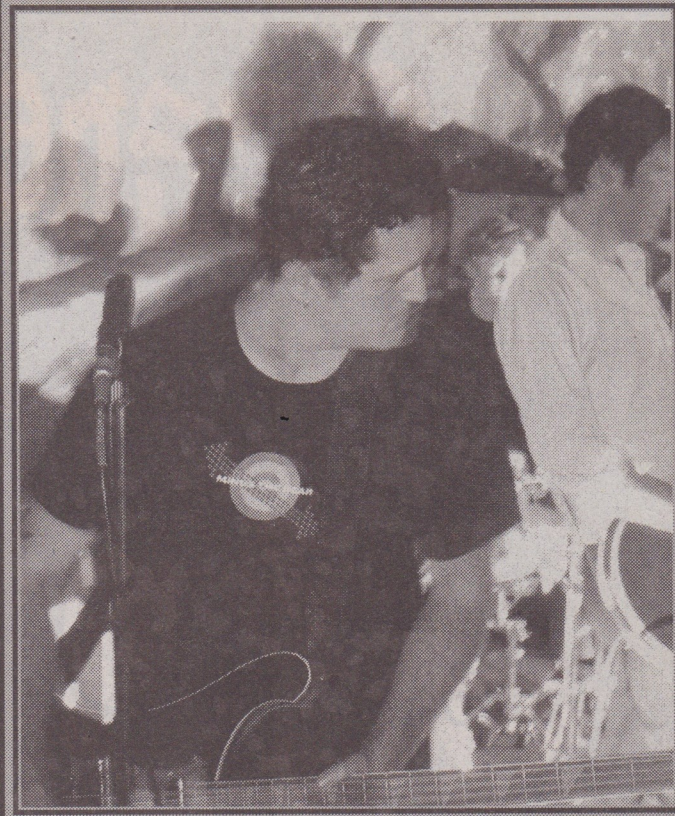


Photo By Eve Ekman

You mean using historical metaphors for personal politics?

Rory: Maybe that's too Elvis Costello. I read that every time Elvis Costello wrote about love or sexual politics he used war metaphors. I think I do that too. It's a part of this ongoing human struggle. It's insoluble. There will probably always be war. There will always be spite, bitterness and love. I appreciate the cruel, cold look at it that Elvis Costello has.

Ryan: Everybody in the band is pretty well read. We like to bullshit a lot and talk shit to each other on the road but we also have a lot of conversations where ideas are exchanged and opinions are swayed. That's who we are and maybe that's how we make the music we make and that's how we've all known each other for ten plus years.

John: It's a fine balance. You can't think all the time on the road or you'll drive yourself insane. You also can't be brain dead the whole time or ten years later you'll have no memory of it. Every tour will have been the same.

Ryan: Basically we're a confluence of highbrow and lowbrow.

As all the best things are. ♪

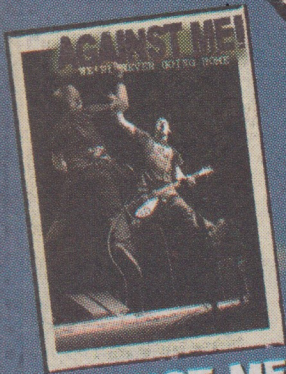
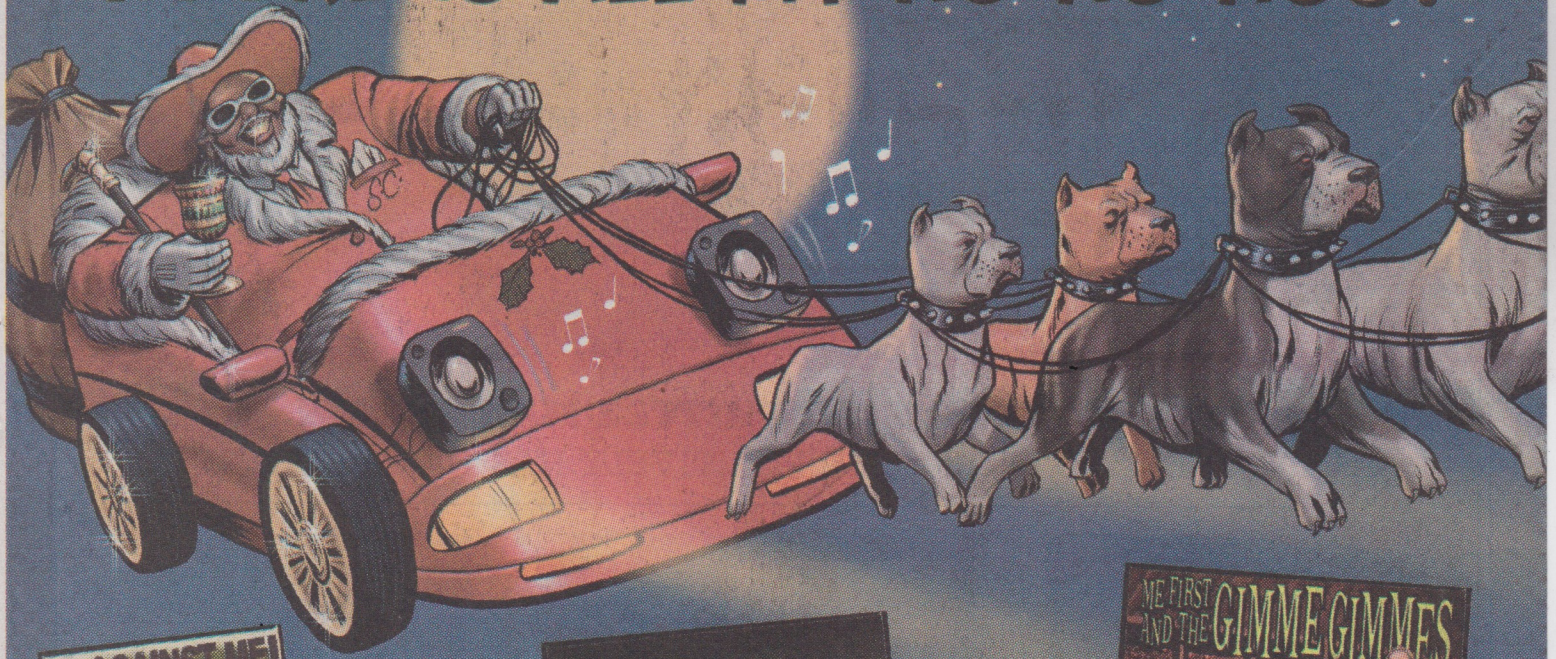
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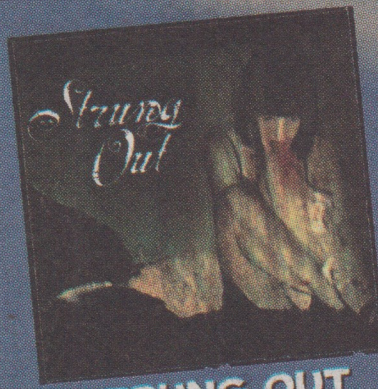
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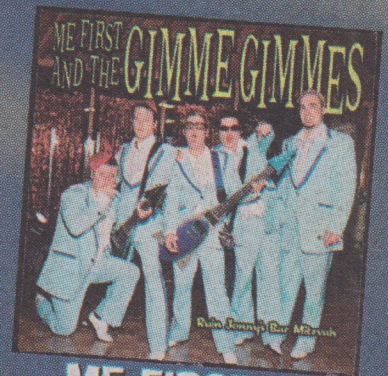
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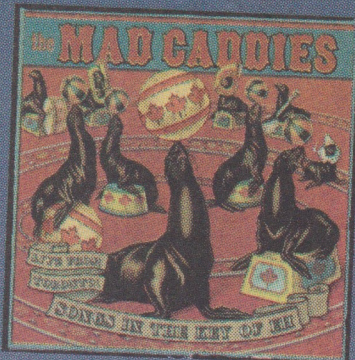
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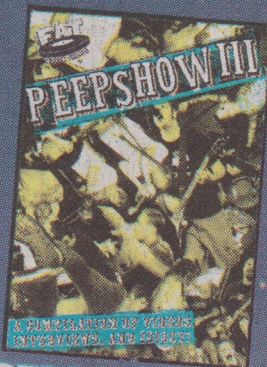
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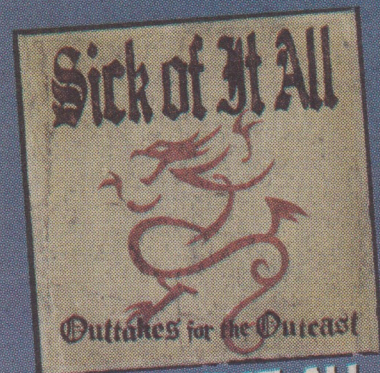
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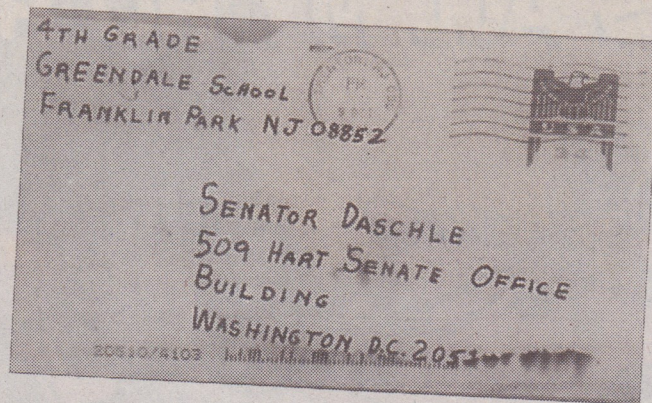
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ATREYU



Photos: Marc McKnight

By Kristofer Todd Upjohn

Atreyu is certainly a band that has taken metalcore in a new direction. Sure it's fast, but that's nothing new. True, melodicism infuses their heaviness, but that's not new either. Maybe it has something to do with, not only the overall unique sound of the Victory Records artist, but also the intriguing artistic direction the new CD, "The Curse", has taken. First off, Atreyu's sound: The grooves and vocal attack of Atreyu combine the sensibilities of thrash and metalcore, resulting in a band that has fresh, fast grooves (read: moshability) and a crisp vocal shout that perfectly accentuates the music.

Getting the chance to pick the brain of Travis of Atreyu let me find out a few cool things. I was very curious about the apparent concept album nature of "The Curse." (Remember the word apparent, that's important). But that will wait for a second. I've had, for a while, a sneaking suspicion where the band's name came from. But I just had to confirm.

"It comes from a movie called 'The

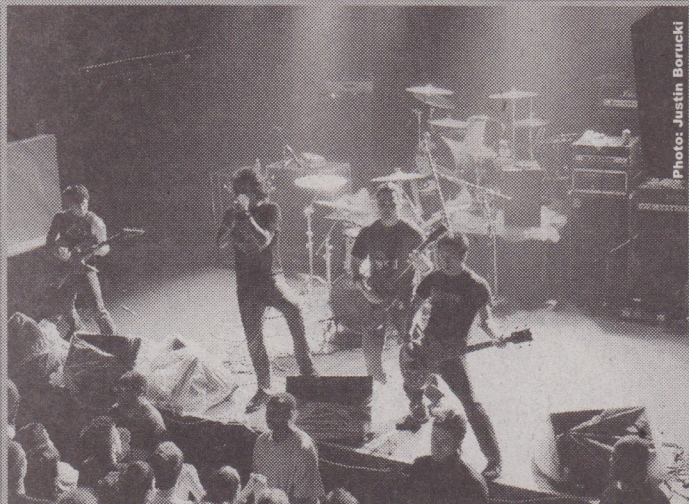
Neverending Story'". Travis said. God, I love it when I'm right. It was chosen, he said, because it was a "cool name." There's no meaning behind it, just coolness. Who needs more reason than that?

Now, onto the non-concept album. What? Hang on, you'll see what I mean. "A lot of people construed it as being a concept album about vampires," Travis confessed. But turns out it was never intended

as that. Again, it was the cool thing, as in vampires are "pretty cool imagery," so said Travis. (And, yes, one of the band members is influenced by Ann Rice.)

It's an interesting tack for a metalcore band, since this really isn't a genre you automatically think of when you think concept album (intentional or not, as even Travis confirms, a lot of fans will take it as such until they find out otherwise). Not to mention the fact that vampires are a thing more at home in gothic music (and some metal, admittedly). Just how has the fan reaction been? "The fan response has been really positive so far," according to Travis. "It's been really cool."

At the time of writing, Atreyu has been touring with the likes of Lamb of God, Unearth and Every Time I Die. This too has been a thing of coolness: "Initially we were really, really nervous." However, they grew into the challenge, of course. "It's awesome. It's really cool to hang out with some old friends." Maybe know-



ing some of the touring bands took some of the edge off. Hmmmm ... probably.

I keep mentioning the term metalcore. While it probably isn't fair to pigeonhole them, they lean heavily in this direction (though with more originality than you find among hardcore bands a lot of the time). But check out their influences: "We all grew up on a lot of punk rock and hardcore." Bands and other styles that have had an influence include The Exploited, The Clash and Slayer (there's the metal!), gothic, industrial and, yes, even hair metal.

But ultimately there isn't some set style in mind. The band just plays and "we make it what it is," Travis said.

I asked Travis what band he would choose to share the stage with (an Upjohn standard question), and ... "I've always been a huge Deftones fan." To play with them, he confessed, would be a dream come true. Being a member of a modern metal band, I thought maybe Travis would have some insights into the modern metal scene. What's his take?

"Heavy music is starting to gain some attention," he said, citing a positive direction for heavy metal these days. "It seems

to be a lot of focus on more underground bands." But what about nu metal? "I think that whole thing kind of ran its course." Maybe we should thank whatever gods we believe in for that...

I prodded about plans for the next album, but apparently I'm thinking farther into the future than the band. They're living in the now, and understandably so, what with all the playing. Touring is the focus. Sitting down to a new album is a step to be taken down the road.

Travis' parting shot to readers is one of gratitude: "Thanks to everybody for listening. We'll see ya on the road!"

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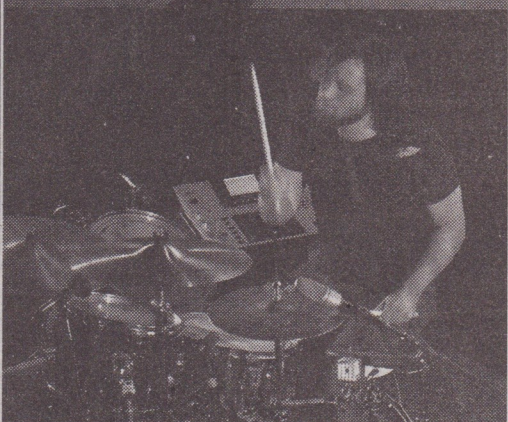
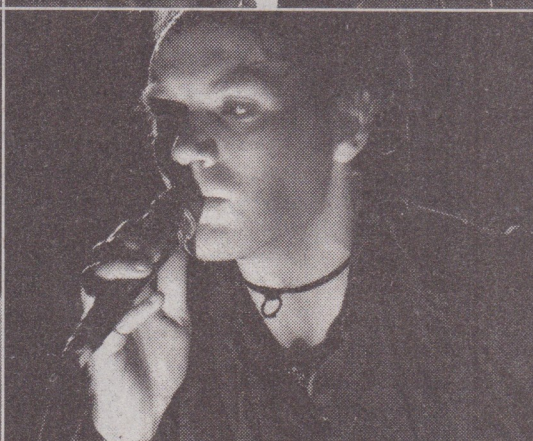
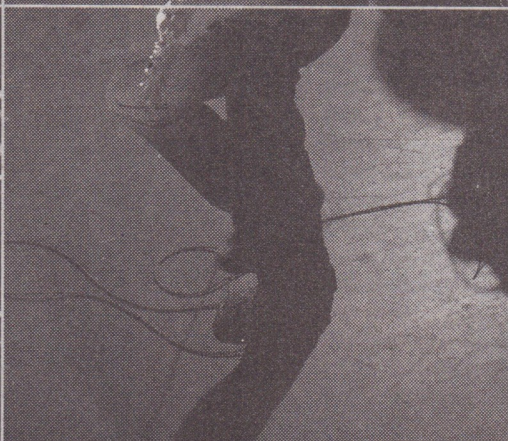
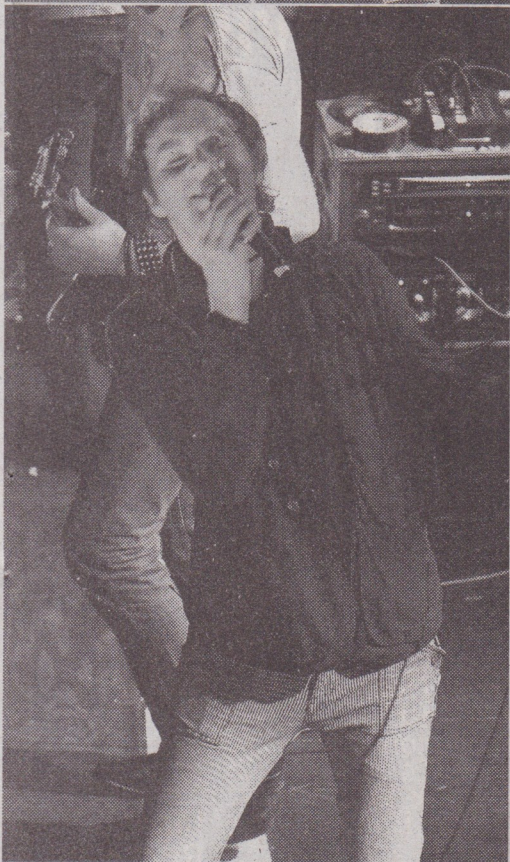
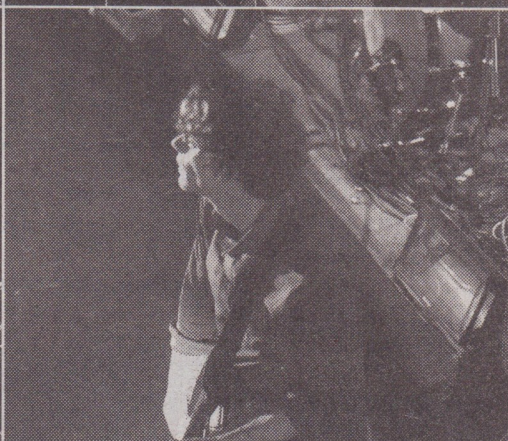
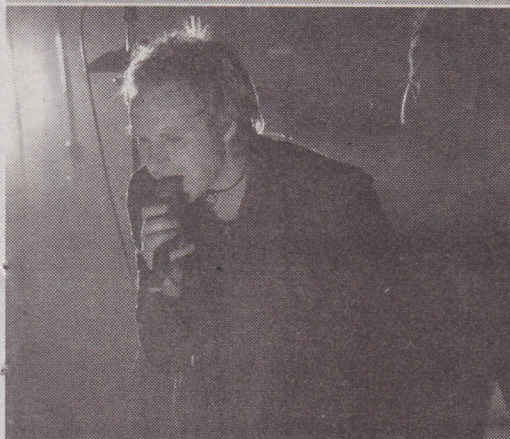
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An Interview With Tom Gabel Of **AGAINST ME!**

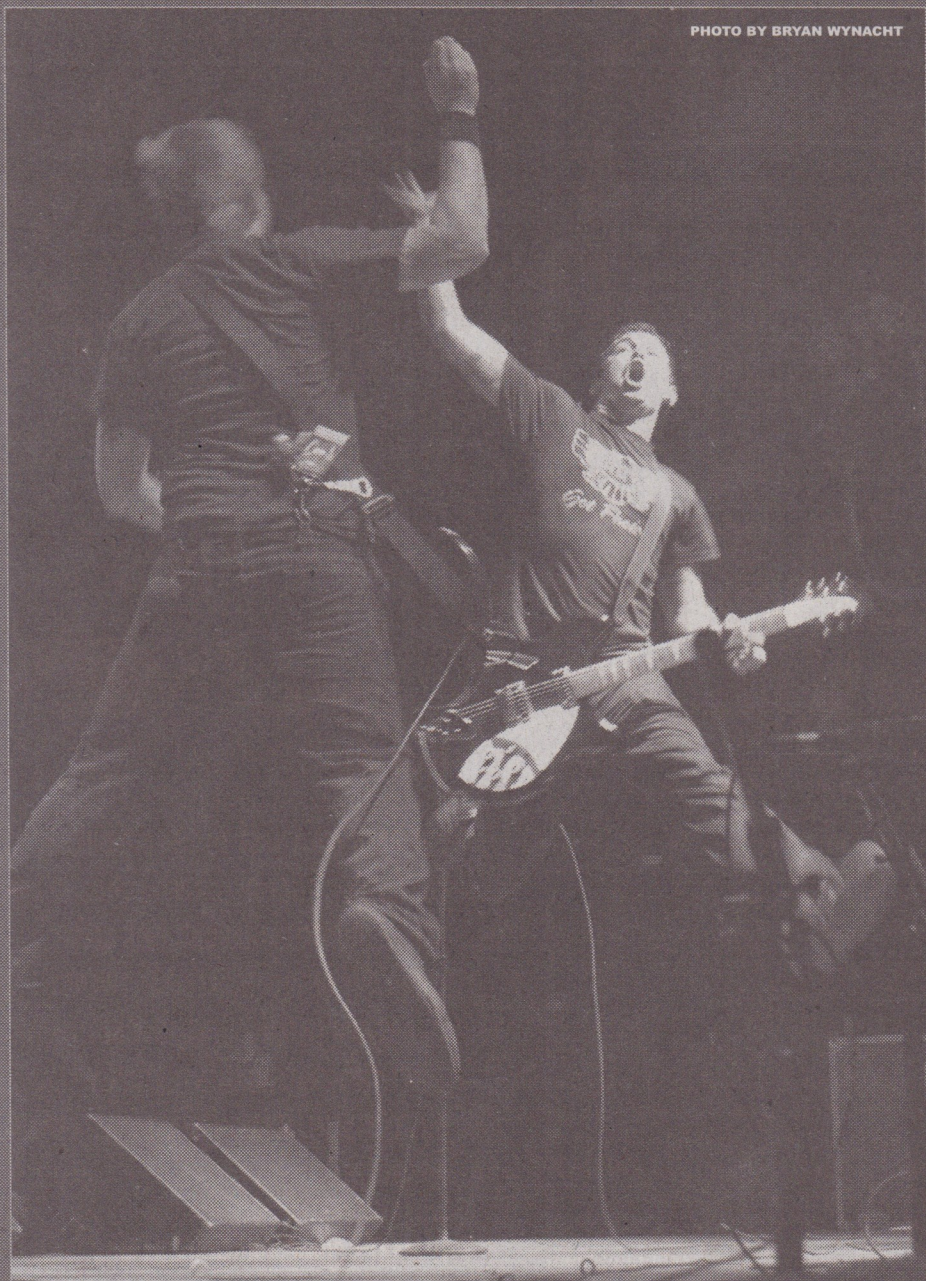


PHOTO BY BRYAN WYNACHT

By Todd Taylor

IT'S ALWAYS A RELIEF WHEN A FANTASTIC BAND ISN'T MADE up of a bunch of assholes. It's even better when you can see them as human beings having fun and supporting their friends. From their records, it's already been established that Against Me! is an incredibly talented, powerful, and passionate band. With this DVD, you can not only see their well-deserved reputation as being one of the best live bands playing right now, you get some great glimpses into the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of an ascending band, working and playing hard.

WHAT WAS THE GENESIS FOR MAKING A DVD?

Mainly, Jake Burghart, who did it, he's a friend from Gainesville. He made this video called *We Like to Hang Out*, which is a compilation of all these Gainesville bands and each Gainesville band has a song. It's a really cool video. You can get it through No Idea. He's done a bunch of other stuff. He's a really fucking talented, awesome dude. He has this band called Fastplant and he made this little, short documentary of a four or five day tour they did. It was hilarious. He did it in total *Real World* style. He showed it to me. It was totally amazing. Having the option, we said, "Fuck it. Want to come on tour and film it?" At the time, it wasn't. "Hey, we have this great idea: let's make a DVD." It was more like, "What's an excuse to bring you on tour and make you serve a purpose while you're on tour so you're not just riding along? Okay, you film and you can make a DVD. That's great. We'll ask Fat if they'll put it out."

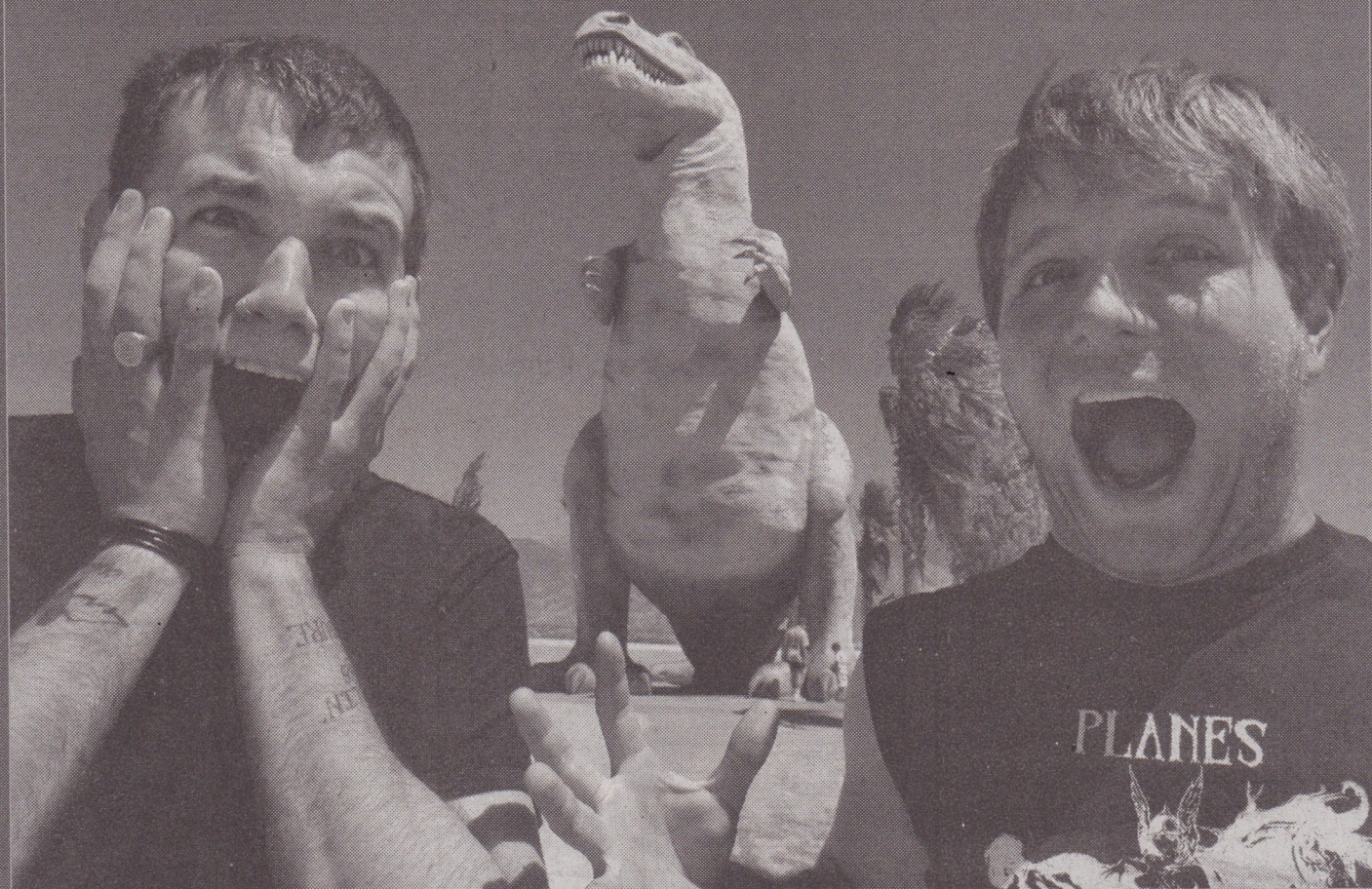
HOW LONG WAS HE ON TOUR WITH YOU GUYS?

For the whole tour, which was a month and a couple days.

DID MAKING A DVD MAKE YOU FEEL PRETENTIOUS, LIKE "WE'RE IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO HAVE A DVD ABOUT US"?

The only things that really made it feel pretentious were the actual interview-type parts. There were originally going to be a lot more of them. More of a *Real World* type, daily thing. "This is how tour's going and I'm really upset with James" or whatever type thing. I think the weirdest thing about it and the weirdest thing when we were asking Fat if they'd put it out was that most bands put out a documentary when they're breaking up. This is the history of our band. That's it. It was a great ride. This isn't meant to be anything like that. That was a weird thing—trying to convey that it's not meant to be any kind of documentary of the band we used to be or the band we are. It's just meant to be a cool thing. "This is what happened on this tour and it was a really fuckin' fun time."

TAKING A CORE SAMPLE OF A SPECIFIC TIME.



Exactly and also to support him. Jake's a person who lives in Gainesville. He works as a screen printer. He does a lot of video stuff. He wants to do that with his life. To be able to take your friend and give him an opportunity to do something that might lead to other opportunities for him to continue towards his goal is pretty awesome.

AGAINST ME! IS CURRENTLY BEING PRESENTED WITH OPPORTUNITIES. WHY NOT SPREAD THEM AROUND?

Oh, yeah. That's the most amazing thing, in my opinion, with all of this, is being able to bring your friends along with it.

WHEN WAS THE TIME YOU FELT MOST CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT BEING FILMED?

When Jake was doing one-on-one type things. When it's the beginning of the tour and he's doing the, "Tell us what you're doing" type thing. Everyone's like, "Well, we're going on tour. That's everything I've got." But when you're playing, you don't fuckin' notice. When you're drunk—which is the rest of the time—you don't notice it either. It's only when you're doing those one-on-one type interviews. But, at the same time, they are important to the DVD to

develop a story line of what's happening. What actually makes it weirder is that it's a friend. If it's someone you don't fuckin' know, then it's totally cool. You can put on whatever kind of front, but when it's Jake: "This is really silly." We're sitting in the van. "You know the answer to the question you're asking me." Then it gets really weird and you feel like an asshole.

Initially, the plan was: what was happening on tour, then song, then what's happening on tour, then a song. Initially, the idea was also to give an explanation for every song and we started to do that. Around the middle of it, I was like, "I really don't like doing this. I feel weird explaining these songs." A lot of them come from fucked up places. I feel like that it doesn't come off right explaining them. I said what I had to say when I wrote this song and trying to put it in other words is really ridiculous.

AND THERE IS THE GLORY OF INTERPRETATION.

That's one of my favorite things about Elvis Costello. He never put his lyrics in his CDs or anything. He was all, "People can leave it up to their own interpretation."

IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY, YOU CAN PICK

STUFF OUT.

Exactly. It challenges you.

I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO THE BIG BOYS A LOT LATELY. THEY RECORDED SONGS IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES AND I CAN PICK SOMETHING OUT OF A SONG ALMOST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER—AND I MAY NOT KNOW WHAT THEIR ORIGINAL INTENTION WAS—BUT IT'S STILL MEANINGFUL TO ME. THAT'S POWERFUL.

It's wrong to spoil that for people.

IT MAKES SONGS PRECIOUS, ALMOST TIMELESS. YOU'RE NOT LOCKED INTO ONE INTERPRETATION.

The truth about it is, with songwriting, the majority of people, they make up their own meanings to these songs and if you actually tell them what it's about—"You're so way off, dude. It has nothing to do with that."

ARE THERE ANY SCENES IN THE DVD THAT YOU STILL WISH WOULD HAVE BEEN CUT



PHOTO BY JOHN JOH

OUT?

There are some things that I actually kind of feel bad about. In particular, we had all of these major label people and a lot of them refused to be on camera. There were many meetings where they tried to plant the camera. "Oh, no. It's totally off." People refused. We had to get them to sign waivers in order for them to be on it and the only people who actually went with it, and were on it, were the Universal people. While we didn't sign to Universal or anything like that, I feel bad that the majority of it was directed at them because I honestly feel that Tom Mackey, in particular, who is on there, I actually like the dude. I think he's a pretty cool guy. It's weird when you actually get into a situation where you're doing something like that, where you're hanging out with all of these weird major label A+R dudes, and you're going to these major label headquarters and seeing what it's actually about. There's a certain stereotype that goes along with that. Every A+R guy already knows that, so they come up with pitches. They try to be like, "No, I'm actually the cool A+R guy. I know what's up with the kids. I know what punk rock's about. We're going to keep it real." They all have their different pitch. Tom Mackey, to me, was someone who realized exactly what

he was doing. He's an A+R guy and that's his job. He wasn't trying to bullshit anybody. He had his pitch and he was kind of sleazy in a way, but I really liked how sleazy he was. It was endearing.

IN THE DVD, HE FULLY ADMITS, I'M PARAPHRASING, "I WAS WALKING BY A CUBICLE AND ONE OF MY UNDERLINGS WAS LISTENING TO YOU, AND I SAID, 'THAT IS A GOOD SONG.'"

Exactly. He, out of all the people, actually hung out the most. He would go for it. He would get so shit faced. The other people, who said, "No, I'm not going to sign that. No, I don't want to be on film," made their actual intentions very apparent, while he was just like, "This is my job, dude. I'm a fan of music. If you want to be a part of it, that's cool. If not, I completely respect that."

ON THE CONVERSE TO THAT, WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU WISH WAS STILL IN THE FILM THAT GOT CUT OUT NEAR THE VERY END?

I kept going back and forth with Jake, being like, "No, we need to add that in," or, "No,

we need to take that out." I wanted it to be more of a representation to people of what it is that is actually fucked up about signing to a major label or about bands going with that or what makes it wrong. Because it isn't always wrong. What makes it wrong, what makes it right. What makes it a good intention, what makes it a bad intention. I don't feel like it necessarily totally captured that. It's a weird thing being in a band. I feel like people glamorize it and glorify it in a way that you miss the point where it's actually connected to reality of that, just like working any kind of other job—not that it's a job, because it's even something that's totally different from that—just the connection to reality that it has. People don't connect that we're normal people and that you're faced with these choices in life and how that relates to everything.

I THINK YOU'VE HIT ON SOMETHING POWERFUL. MUSICIANS, ESPECIALLY PUNK ROCK MUSICIANS, HAVE A WAY OF BEING ELEVATED VERY QUICKLY, AS OPPOSED TO WRITERS OR PAINTERS. SOMEONE CAN HAVE AMAZING SUCCESS AS A WRITER AND THEY DON'T

FACE THE SAME TYPE OF STATIC.

Same with filmmakers. Exactly. Musicians, especially with punk rock, you get called a sellout, whatever. There is a way to do that and keep your integrity, but there is a way to do that and not keep your integrity. Not at all. You have to take things on a case-by-case basis and you have to realize its human beings involved with all of this. It's a weird thing, too, when it comes to commodification of art. What is the boundary and what is the line that you cross when it stops being art and when it's commodified and mass-produced? To me, some of my favorite records are records that have sold millions and millions and millions of copies and I consider them great pieces of art. But at the same time, other records that have been put out, like a Britney Spears record, that has sold just the same amount of copies is not art, in my opinion, and is complete bullshit. Plastic crap. So, what is the difference? Where does it start becoming art?

A TECHNICAL QUESTION. DID YOUR MERCH GURU JORDAN EVER MAKE THE SPARKLY AGAINST ME! TUTUS THAT HE MENTIONED IN THE DVD?

No. [laughs] He was just winging that. It's unfortunate, also, we realized when it was too late—I have a copy of Jordan's Bar Mitzvah video that I stole from his mother's house. It's the funniest fucking thing I've ever seen. He actually leads a conga line, wearing a sombrero. And he plays air guitar with a plastic blow-up, inflatable guitar to Nine Inch Nails' "Head Like a Hole." In hindsight, I wish that we would have put that on the DVD as a special option.

WHAT WAS THE MOST FUN PART ABOUT MAKING THE FILM?

The whole thing. Being on tour was the fun part. It was cool as shit, too, knowing that when anything stupid or crazy happened that we were getting it on film and everybody going back and watching it and going, "That's fuckin' hilarious."

TELL ME ABOUT THE CRAZY GUY WHO JUST SEEMED TO SHOW UP IN PHILADELPHIA.

Oh, Brig. We actually flew him out there just so he could be in the DVD. I have Brig's name tattooed on my leg. He's one of my best friends. The funny thing is, okay, when the whole Universal thing started happening—they called me on the phone. They came out to El Paso for the first time. They came to the show and Brig so happened to be there. Brig's a crazy dude. He has a couple drinks and he just starts going nuts. He made them so uncomfortable and it was so awe-



PHOTO BY JOHN JOH

some watching it. They're trying so hard. "We love your band. You should do this. You should do that. Come and meet us. We'll take you out to dinner." And he's just not having any of it. He's going crazy, picking them up, bear hugging them and everything. Once we knew that Jake was coming along, we're like, "Fuck it. Let's fly Brig out. It'll be awesome." And we told him, "Just go for it. Make them as uncomfortable as possible." We succeeded in that, I think. With us, it's really important to be friends with anybody we do anything with. Brig is a good friend and if I'm going to do anything with friends, then they should be friends with my other friends and accept them for that. It shouldn't be an issue of, "Oh, I'm embarrassed of my friend and how he's acting right now because you're uncomfortable with them." Fuck you for that.

THE SCENE ON THE DVD IS, YOU WALK ONTO A FANCY TOUR BUS, POUR YOURSELF A DRINK, AND THEN SOMEONE STARTS HAS-SLING YOU BECAUSE NO ONE ON THE BUS KNOWS WHO YOU ARE.

You can watch the DVD. The dude was fuckin' pissed. I was like, "Hey, it's cool, man. We played on the same stage as you. I'm in this band and we're on Fat." It was cool from there on out. We left and we came back with even more people. We took a

bunch of frozen pizzas out of their fridge. Went to another bus and microwaved them. Everybody was dancing on the roof of their bus.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD ABOUT WITH THIS DVD?

Jake did an awesome job. I think he's really fucking talented and I think it's really cool that we were able to do it. I think that tour, in particular, with those bands, Planes Mistaken for Stars and No Choice, was awesome. That was seriously one of the best groups of people to go on tour with. It was a blast. Everyone got along so well.

DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING FROM THE PROCESS?

As far as filming, I know nothing, but it is interesting having something documented. It almost, in a way, caps a period of time.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR ANOTHER BAND THAT WANTS TO MAKE A FILM?

I think it is important to have a purpose for it, unless it is a retrospective, breaking up, or if it's just a "we just want a live show" type thing. But if you are having behind-the-scenes type things, I think it's very important to have a purpose and a very developed reason that you're doing it. Do you want to show people what it's like being on tour? Do you want to capture a moment? What are you trying to do with that? ☛

RAPID FIRE

SHORT
INTERVIEWS
FOR SHORT
ATTENTION
SPANS

PROFILE: LICKGOLDENSKY

By Peewee

NAME:

Jamie

POSITION IN THE BAND:

Guitar

HOMETOWN:

Philadelphia, PA

LICKGOLDENSKY, OR LGS SOUNDS LIKE:

The Melvins, The Mars Volta, Neurosis, King Crimson, and Big Black all fighting together to make their parts the loudest.

OUR LABEL (LEVEL PLANE) IS COOL BECAUSE:

You can call Greg at any point during the night or day, and he always answers his phone. We finished recording our record on March 3rd, we had the finished product by March 24th. How fucking cool is that? Talk about someone who doesn't fuck around!

FOUR CD'S THAT ARE INFLUENCING ME THE MOST RIGHT NOW:

Four CD's that are influencing you the most right now: Cat Power "Set You Free", Black Dice "Miles Of Smiles", Les Savy Fav "Inches", The Mars Volta "Deloused."

BEST THING TO DO IN THE VAN IS:

Park, and get out.

WORST DRIVING INCIDENT INVOLVED:

Thank fucking someone, we've never had any real horror stories. The worst shit we've had is maybe a flat tire once, and having to get a new drive shaft put in. Other than that we've been really lucky with that stuff.

PHILADELPHIA HAS INFLUENCED OUR MUSIC IN THE SENSE THAT:

We don't want to ever be another local Philly band that sits around talking about how great we are, and only plays the local bar circuit. Philly has shown us that if we want to do anything at all band wise, that we have to get off our asses, and get shit done ourselves. We don't want to be the kids at the local bar, talking about what we're going to eventually do. We'd rather have no one ever see us, because we're always gone, on tour away from Philadelphia. Philly

has shown us that being lazy gets you nowhere.

THE KIDS THESE

DAYS ARE:

Bolt Thrower or

BOLT THROWER:

I'll take both.

BEST BAD

RELIGION DISC:

Wow, that's a good

question. I'm going

with No Control, or

Against The Grain.

Both of those records are timeless, and untouchable. I've seen more pro-skater's in the early 90's at Bad Religion shows, than I've ever seen at demo's or contests.

UPCOMING TOURS OR RELEASES:

We just put out our second LP and an EP on Level-Plane. We did a full US tour with Breathe Resistant this September, and a full US tour headlining this October, and a UK tour in November. We'll be pretty straight for tours for a little bit.

WHEN WE'RE NOT ON TOUR WE EARN OUR LIVING BY:

Alexander books bands like Hot Cross, Transistor/Transistor, The Plot To Blow Up The Eiffel Tower, Anodyne, etc. I work at Very Distro, answering the most annoying questions from kids EVER. Eric works at a Whole Foods, and Tom is a full time student.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SHOWS:

When it's over, and I can finally have some money to get something to eat.

BAND THAT STILL GIVES ME THE CHILLS WHEN I SEE THEM LIVE:

The Melvins, hands down. Still one of the heaviest fucking bands on the god damned planet. No one will ever top that band. If they're up there droning away I'm psyched. If they're playing all "noise" songs, I'm psyched. If they're playing songs from Bullhead I'm one happy fucking kid. The only band that truly doesn't give a fuck what you think.

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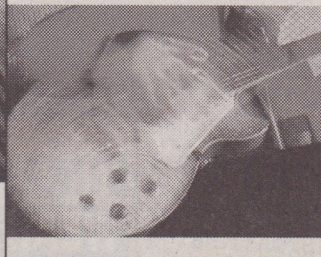
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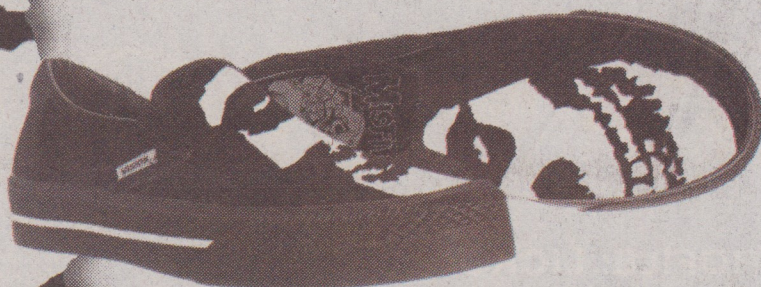
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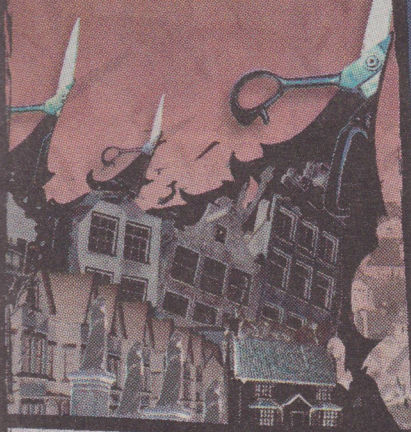
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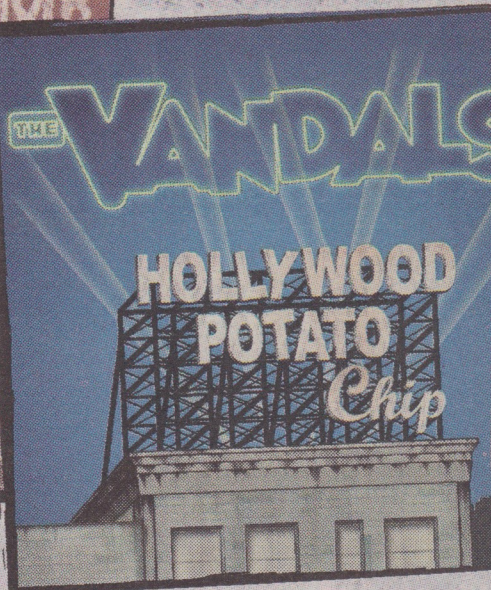
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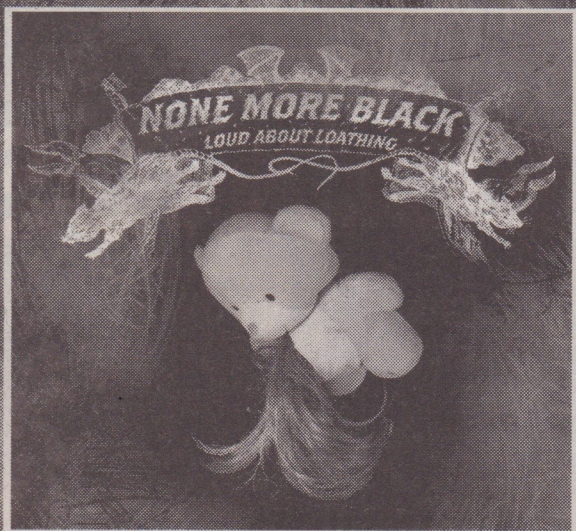
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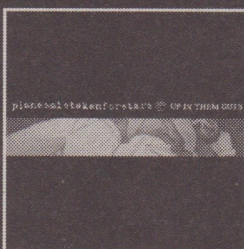
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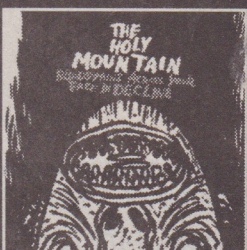
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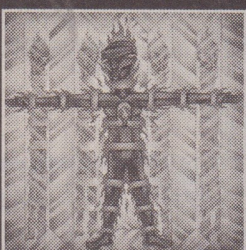
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RICANSTRUCTION

A SPARK FOR CHANGE

Photo by Sam LaHoz (www.slny.net)



By Brian Peterson

Music was once a primal force for rebellion under the guise of artistic expression. For blues pioneers like Robert Johnson, jazz artists like John Coltrane and Miles Davis, rock legends like Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix, and, of course, punk icons like The Sex Pistols, The Clash and Bad Brains, the aesthetic underneath their often frantic songs was an urgent cry for some sort of change, be it social, political, or personal. Punk and hardcore have carried on this tradition since these aforementioned pioneers passed on or withered away, but recently things have started to change. Hardcore and punk have blown up and instead of bringing any sort of change to the mainstream that has embraced it, these genres have, instead, embraced the mainstream.

Of course, that's not to say that all is lost. There are artists out there who are still investing every ounce of their souls into their sound in order to spark some kind of change. New York's Ricanstruction is a perfect example of a band

that walks the walk and talks the talk.

Ricanstruction is a band of Puerto Rican artists who want nothing more than to open people's minds through their intense concoction socially conscious hardcore, which comes

off as somewhat reminiscent of Bad Brains. The band's collective legacy of political activism and counter-culture attitude is, in fact, more of an influence on its sound more than anything else. As the group's vocalist, Not4Profit, shares in the follow-

ing interview, Ricanstruction, if anything, is about making a change. Given the current war-fueled climate the world is currently parading through, we need more artists like this to stand up and say something... anything. Though musically different than what a "traditional" punk/hardcore fan might expect, Ricanstruction truly embodies the spirit enkindled by their revolutionary music mothers and fathers of decades past.

Could you tell me about when Ricanstruction first started out?

Well, we started out as an artists collective back in the barrio. Our neighborhoods were under siege from gentrifi-

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cation, so we tried to do what we could to fight it by using art as a form of resistance. Most of us were graffiti writers already, so the logical first move was to tag up on the walls in the hood. So we started out putting up political and anti-gentrification slogans instead of the usual tags. And those of us who weren't necessarily artists found other things to do, like conducting political education classes, or really artistic endeavors like throwing stones through the windows of the corporate chains stores that were trying to open up in the neighborhood.

When did Ricanstruction actually become a band?

As time went on, and our "war of art" progressed, we continued to try to find different ways to use art as resistance. We started discovering all kinds of talent in the hood that we never knew we had. Eventually we started "appropriating" film to make DIY films or "borrowing" musical instruments to bang away at, or just shouting in the streets, but with riddim, of course, because we are Puerto Rican. Eventually making noise actually turned into playing real music, so we started playing in the street and looking for clever ways to incorporate all the elements of art that we had been teaching ourselves. We started white washing walls on the sides of buildings to use as a screen to show

our films, and after the films were over we would plug into a streetlight and play music while inviting folks to make a mural on that same white-washed wall. It was great because the graffiti was illegal, no permission, and the music was illegal, no permit, and we stole the electrical power, but the police would stay away because so many people would come together and the pigs didn't wanna turn a party into a riot. So while we were teaching ourselves to make music and art, we were also teaching ourselves to ignore authority, to not legitimize authority, to say, "fuck authority."

So, were all of Ricanstruction's first shows on the "street"?

Yeah, we started out playing in the community gardens that the city was threatening to shut down, and uptown block parties where we played alongside meringue and salsa bands. And in the winter we played in renegade churches that would put on political events and squats that had heat. We didn't really want to play the clubs because those were owned by someone else and we were trying to create our own autonomous zones in the barrio.

But eventually you did play the "legitimate" rock clubs.

Yeah, eventually. Collectively we had discussions, debates,

and arguments as to whether we should venture into the venues. Some of us felt that since we were outsiders and outcasts with a radical political "people's" message, then it made perfect sense that we would use our "outlaw" art to infiltrate, subvert, and sabotage a music scene that was controlled and co-opted by the corporations. Personally, I didn't see the point in it, and I was happy to just keep playing in the ghettos and gutters. But I got out voted.

And the first clubs you played were punk spaces?

We started out at ABC No Rio, which was not really a "club," but actually a squat that had hardcore matinees on the weekends. From there we started playing CBGB, which was the first real "club" we played. It was cool, though, because CBGB pretty much maintained its punk vibe from way back when. We just brought our peeps in and played our music and the club stayed out of our way.

But were you guys playing "punk rock" back then?

We were doing our own thing, which incorporated anything and everything that ever came into our cipher. We grew up as part of the "hip hop nation," but we also were into salsa, bomba, bebop, reggae, anything and everything under the sun and over the sewer. We

could never overstand the idea of doing punk as a profession, jazz as a job, salsa for a salary, meringue for money. This idea of getting locked in an envelope of style or genre. We wanted to break the rules, obliterate borders, smash styles! To us "punk" was not about a certain style, or three particular chords, or a way of dressing and acting, but about a way of doing things that was against the grain and against the shitstem. We had an affinity for punk because it was counter culture by its very nature. It wasn't meant to be about fashion, but anti-fashion, anti-mainstream, anti-shitstem. These are the things we embraced about punk—it's radical, political nature, not it's co-optation by the capitalist's mainstream machine.

So you defined punk outside of the music?

I wouldn't say outside. But we saw the music as part of a counter culture, part of a sub culture. Music is not the counter culture; a particular style or sound is not the counter culture. We embraced punk as part of a rebel culture that was anti-establishment, anti-authority and DIY.

Do you still see punk that way?

To a large degree the trappings of punk, just like hip hop, has been co-opted by the machine and sold back to us as a commodity, a product, a fashion. There are bands that are certainly not living the punk lifestyle, and never were. But they've certainly got the "sound" down, or the style, or the fashion, and they look really good in their green mohawks and leather jackets. But to us when something becomes mainstream or acceptable to the establishment than it ceases to be punk. When something becomes fashionable it ceases to be punk. There is no such thing as a "conservative punk," or a republican punk, or punk fashion just like there's no such thing as an anarchist who believes in the shitstem. Punk is anti-fashion, anti-establishment. As far as I'm concerned, when something becomes acceptable to the establishment, it ceases to be punk. When the establishment or the dominant culture embraces you, starts thinking you are beautiful, acceptable, you stop being punk. Punk is, as rastas say, "dread" to

Photo by Sam LaToz (www.slny.net)



Babylon. I'm punk because I'm Puerto Rican, not the other way around. So, yeah, I still see punk that way, I still see it's potential as a revolution wrench, but only because I read the DIY zines, and listen to pirate and community sponsored radio, and go see bands in the squats, and support dirt roots organizations that are seeking to topple the tower of babble. I see it that way because I keep my ear to the streets and tossed the TV out the window a long time ago.

Your DIY ethic means that you did everything yourself? What did this incorporate?

Pretty much everything. We made our own art, murals, posters, (and did our own poster- ing) our own records, our own zines and pamphlets. Our own films, our own radio. We made our own clothes, our own food. Well, not really, we mostly stole that. [laughs] Some folks did dumpster dives, but I was never as crazy about that. Yeah, we created our own "schools" where we taught our selves and our people what we needed to know to survive America.

Your latest record is coming out on the Uprising label. How did that come about?

It's also a DIY label owned by a Latino cat. We've always worked in solidarity with under-

ground political organizations, record labels, magazines, anyone who's doing it themselves. The trick is to try to stay outside, or stay as far away as you can, from the corporate machine.

Your new record incorporates elements of punk, hip hop, reggae, salsa, and maybe the kitchen sink as well. Why did you go for such a wide blend of sounds?

Yeah, we like to say it's just like revolution. Our sound is everything you've ever heard and nothing you've ever heard. You can't be a Puerto Rican raised on the streets of Nueva York and not be open and inspired by everything and anything. We wanted to create something that was totally free and outside what is expected, and our only criteria was to say something worth hearing.

Can you explain a bit about the concept behind your new record, *Love and Revolution*?

I've never cared for albums where a bunch of songs are just thrown together. I always felt that if you were gonna put out a complete record, as opposed to a bunch of singles then they should have a true, real connection. So, yeah, to us it's a concept record. Of course, someone else might just see it as a bunch of love songs. Like a Luther Vandross

record, maybe.

Love songs?

Yeah, love songs for the revolution. Che Guevara said, "The true revolutionary is guided by the greatest feelings of love."

Who were your musical influences?

There weren't so many influences as inspirations and it was a wide variety. Everyone from Bad Brains, Black Flag, the Dead Kennedys and Suicidal Tendencies to Willie Colon, Hector Lavoe, Ray Barretto and El Gran Combo, The Wailers, Steele Pulse, Black Uhuru and Burning Spear, Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Nina Simone, Coltrane, Monk, Miles, Jaco Patorius, and we could go on and on. Anything that moved us, anything that tried to bust down barricades and caused you to dig deeper has been an influence. The idea was always to be beyond the mainstream, beyond the shitstem. To use music, art, culture as a form of resistance, as a form of revolt. Make the artists the rebel, "the music," as Fela Kuti said, "music can be revolutionary, because revolution means change.

Have you always saw music as revolutionary? As a kind of political tool?

As a tool, a weapon, yes, but not the revolution itself. Music

can be a way to talk about things, bring things to the surface, to make people think, and even encourage them to act. But it is not the revolution itself. The musician, the artists, tries to create the world they wanna see, which is an act of rebellion, but the real revolution will be made by the people themselves. Music is only the soundtrack for the revolution, art is only the aesthetic.

Do you see your music as art first, or political first?

I think everything is political, whether you are preaching, ranting, revolting, or staying completely quiet and not saying shit. The inaction of acquiescing is also a political act. We live in a country, shit, on a planet where all things are political. People are feasting or starving because of politics. People are living in the lap of luxury or are homeless because of politics. People are free or in a prison - of the body and mind - because of politics. People are living and dying because of politics. Whether you are doing anything about it or not, that's another story. So, we never felt we were making "political" music. We were just making music about our experiences, our lives, our struggles, our resistance. If our music is political, it is because our world is political. Resistance is a necessity, not a fashion. Politics is a reality, not a statement.

You say this record might just be a bunch of love songs, but all of your lyrics touch upon all kinds of subjects, all of which most folks would classify as "political" or even radical. You say everything is political by its very nature, but does Ricanstruction have an agenda?

No, I wouldn't say we have an agenda. Unless you count the quest to disrupt and "downs troy" Babylon as an agenda. But that's not an agenda, just a human need. You can write about nothing, or you can write about something, just like you can do something or do nothing. We choose to give a damn in whatever we do. But then we ain't got a choice! Well, maybe we do have an agenda. Fuck the shitstem!

And do you think your music has the ability to achieve such a lofty goal?

Maybe not, but we can, at least as Eldridge Cleaver said, "Throw a nigga wrench into the machine." ☛

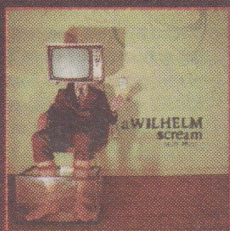


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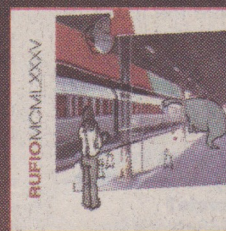


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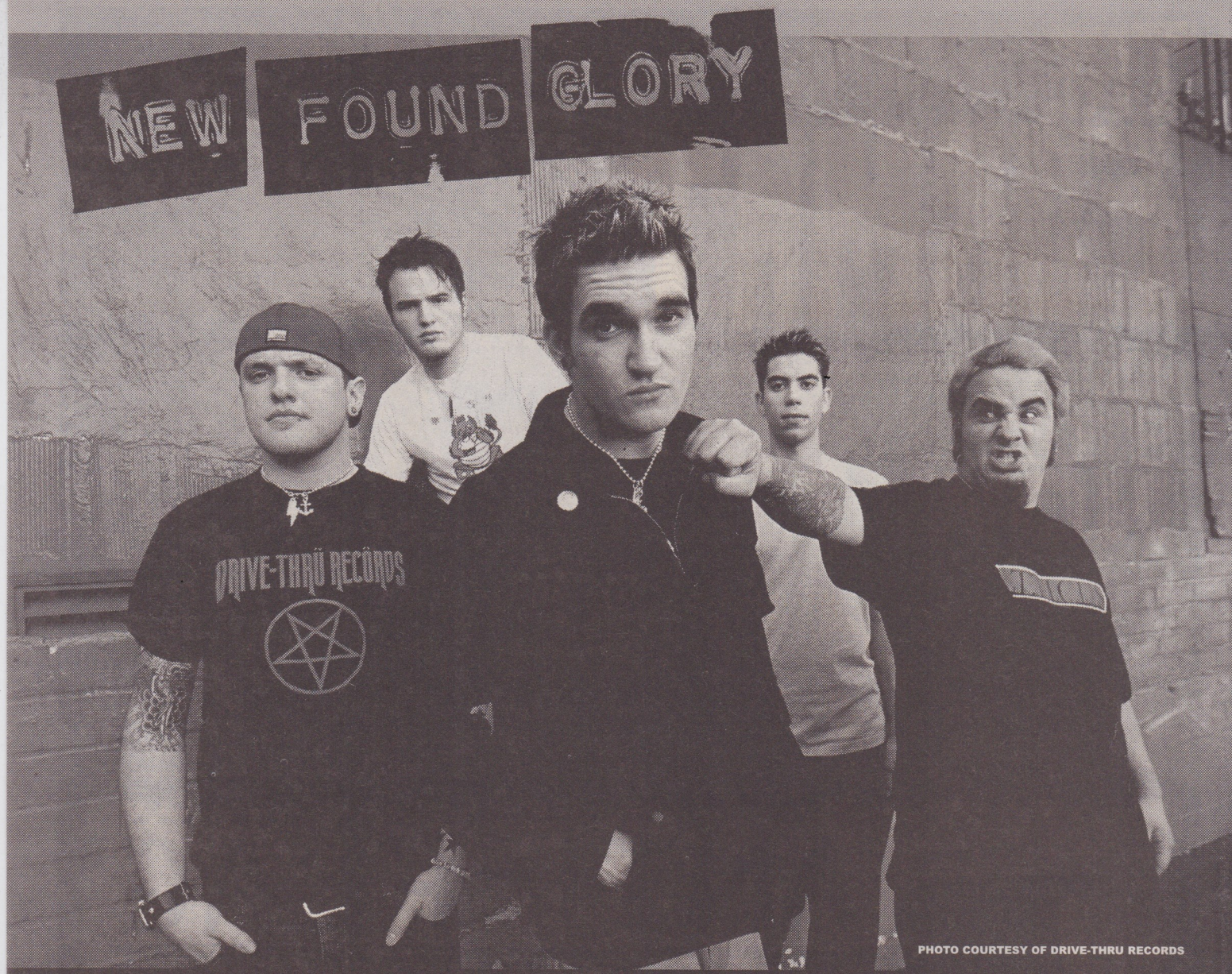
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AN INTERVIEW WITH NEW FOUND GLORY'S CYRUS BOLOOKI

By Don Sill

The word 'catalyst' means "something or someone that brings change without being directly affected itself" and also acts as the basis behind New Found Glory's latest album on Drive-Thru/Geffen Records. The album appropriately named, "Catalyst" demonstrates a young band on a mission to grow, develop, change and ultimately evolve to another level within the pop-punk movement.

New Found Glory (NFG) spread their wings of change on their fourth album by approaching their songs and style in ways they've never done before. They experimented with guitar tones and tunings, using a variety of amps and different recording methods. They incorporated different instruments and musicians into their sound which gives every song it's own unique identity.

"The feeling of this record, and it comes with a lot of what New Found Glory always had in the past, is the energy of the songs and the attitude," says NFG drummer Cyrus Bolooki. "We really did

A New Found Glory



"Nothing Said Can Stay"

kind of dive off a little bit into different ends to kind of stretch what the sound and

what the definition of New Found Glory is and we really weren't afraid to do that because of a lot of confidence that we've gotten through the last couple of years."

Sue they're confident, but in some ways it is as though NFG are working to stay ahead of the curve as pop-punk seems to be deflating. The band, which has worked up the ranks from their humble beginnings in '97 as a garage band in Coral Springs, Fla. to international acclaim in recent

years, seem to be bending their sound to keep up with the times in order to maintain their industry status which they worked so hard to obtain.

"We actually had some time before we recorded this record to just relax and we haven't been able to do that in years," continued Bolooki. "I think we're pretty comfortable knowing what we can do and we're here to do so it allowed us to do things a little different. If a riff came out that sounded a little weird we wouldn't discard the riff just because it was a New Found Glory riff, we actually took all the ideas in. I think what you actually have on this record is a collection of songs that are very diverse and we push the envelope even further. Our slow songs are even slower, our faster songs are even faster and I think there's something for everyone on this record."

The second single off Catalyst,

"Failure's Not Flattering", for example, was constructed with the songwriting and production of '80s new wave. Complete with four-on-the-floor drum beats and a keyboard lead, the track instantly jots memories of The Cars, Talking Heads and even the Go-Go's. In fact, the working title of the song was dubbed "Belinda Carlisle."

"We treated this record as if every song, every riff and every idea had it's own entity and we wanted to fully explore them," said Bolooki. "So, when we started to write that song we knew it was gonna have that '80s feel because of the guitar lead, which is now a keyboard lead. That's a whole new concept

for, something we've never done before but it became a really good addition to the album."

While "Catalyst" does indeed still offer the classic NFG flare of aggressive, melodic pop-punk gems they do incorporate a number of elements falling out-

side of the New Found Glory mold. "I think we really stepped it up on this record and it helped define a very unique sound that put our own little place in this world," said the drummer proudly.

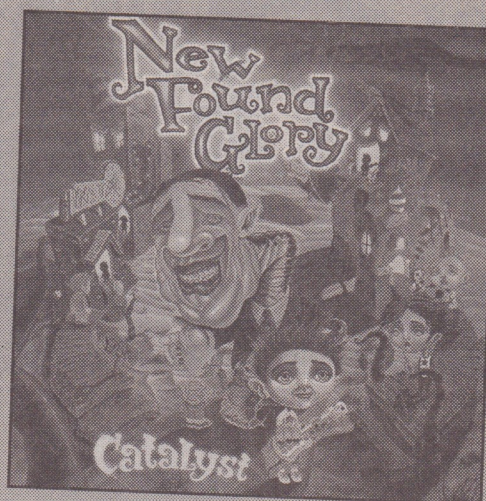
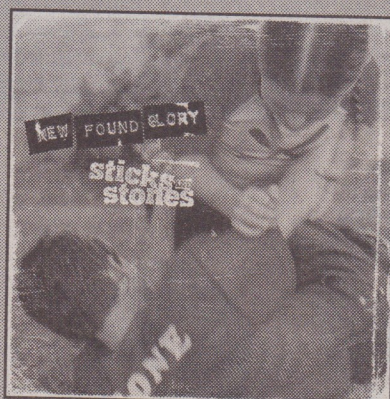
"Music now-a-days is getting very saturated. There's a lot of acts coming out right now and it gets hard to differentiate and without really trying, just being ourselves, we found our own niche in this world."

NFG's "catalyst" approach seems to be working quite well. With 430,000 copies sold after only two months and massive rotation on rock radio and MTV the boys certainly prove that change is good and have more than earned their

rank among the heavy-weights of the pop-punk genre.

"I think the good thing that we have is the experience of touring," Bolooki explained. "If you looked at the last tour we did before recording this record, it was the biggest tour we've ever done. Us and Good Charlotte were out on tour together and selling out places with 25,000 people while bands who were plastered all over radio weren't anywhere near that. So, we just have a lot of confidence and that confidence helped brush aside any of those expectations."

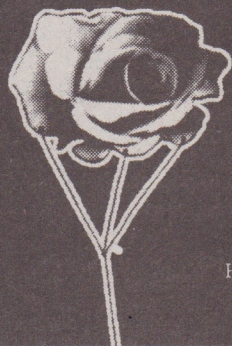
"One of the best things about all this success for us was that it didn't come overnight, we've been at this for a while. We've had a little taste of success off our previous record so it wasn't anything that came as a crazy shock, we kind of built up to this. We can really look back and just be proud that we did a lot of hard work and continued to work hard...it's just so much fun for us to do this and we hope that there's no end in sight for us...Right now it's just all about longevity and doing this for as long as we can. We're not really worried because our music has already spoken for itself and we'll let it all take care of itself and just enjoy it and make it last as long as we can."



And as long as Bolooki and his mates can continue changing and adapting with the times they may be around for a long time indeed. As a wise man once said, "do not fear change, for it

is an unchangeable law of progress," and so it seems is New Found Glory. ☛

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ALAN BISBORT


SONGS FOR BUSH
HE JUST HASN'T EARNED IT YET, BABY...


On the eve of his second theft of an American presidency, George W. Bush was denied at least one thing - the right to use "Still the One" by Orleans as a theme song on his campaign trail. He had appropriated the song, without the song writer's permission, and was using it at all the whistle stops. It's a perfect song for him: cheerily insipid, corporate-ad-friendly, mostly one-syllable words, and it is familiar (through incessant playings on Lite Rock stations and on elevator Muzak) to all the lemmings willing to vote for someone who will kill their kids and steal their jobs. But it turns out that "Still the One" was written by a guy (John Hall) who's a Democratic activist and county legislator from upstate New York. Hall threatened to sue Bushyboy, and the song was yanked. So there he is, poor Georgie, without a campaign song.

Now that we're stuck with him for the next four years, Bush deserves at least a playlist of appropriate songs to capture the flavor of his presidency. With that in mind, and with some thanks to a few posters on the Daily Kos Web site, I have come up with a few possible selections. AMP readers are encouraged to send along your own nominations for this project.

- * "You Just Haven't Earned it Yet, Baby" by the Smiths
- * "Liar" by Henry Rollins ("I'll lie again and again/ I'll lie again and again and I'll keep lying/ I promise").
- * "American Idiot" by Green Day
- * "Pinhead Cramberry Dance" by Thelast Goodbye
- (It makes no sense, but you just gotta do it).
- * "Kill the Poor" by the Dead Kennedys

- * "The End" by the Doors
- * "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" and "Highway to Hell" by AC/DC
- * "Death of a Clown" by the Kinks ("Let's all drink to the death of a clown.")
- * "The Call Up" by the Clash ("It's up to you not to heed the call up...")
- The military draft is coming.**
- * "Draft Morning"/ "Wasn't Born to Follow" by the Byrds
- * "Monster" by Steppenwolf ("There's a monster on the loose / and he's got our head inside a noose...")
- * "Loser" by Beck (in the break of the song, there's a sample with a voice saying "I'm a survivor, I'm a winner. Things are gonna change, I can feel it," which was Georgie's daddy, GHW Bush from his losing campaign in 1992). Also, the following lyrics perfectly capture the reality we are entering: "In the time of chimpanzees I was a monkey/ Butane in my veins and I'm out to cut the junkie / Forces of evil on a bozo nightmare/ Ban all the music with a phony gas chamber/ 'cuz one's got a weasel and the other's got a flag/ One's on the pole, shove the other in a bag/ With the rerun shows and the cocaine nose-job," etc.
- * "Rich Man's War" by Steve Earle
- * "Two Little Hitlers" by Elvis Costello
- * "The United States of Amnesia" by Robert Wyatt
- * "If I Had A Brain" and "Plastic Saddle" by George Lindsey (he played "Goober" on the Andy Griffith Show)
- * "The Future" ("I've seen the future / it is murder...") and "Democracy" ("Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.") by Leonard Cohen.
- * The entirety of the new album by Camper Van Beethoven, "New Roman Times".

Alan Bisbort is a columnist for the Hartford Advocate. 



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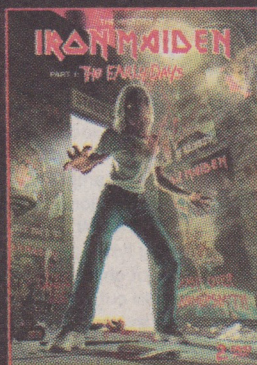
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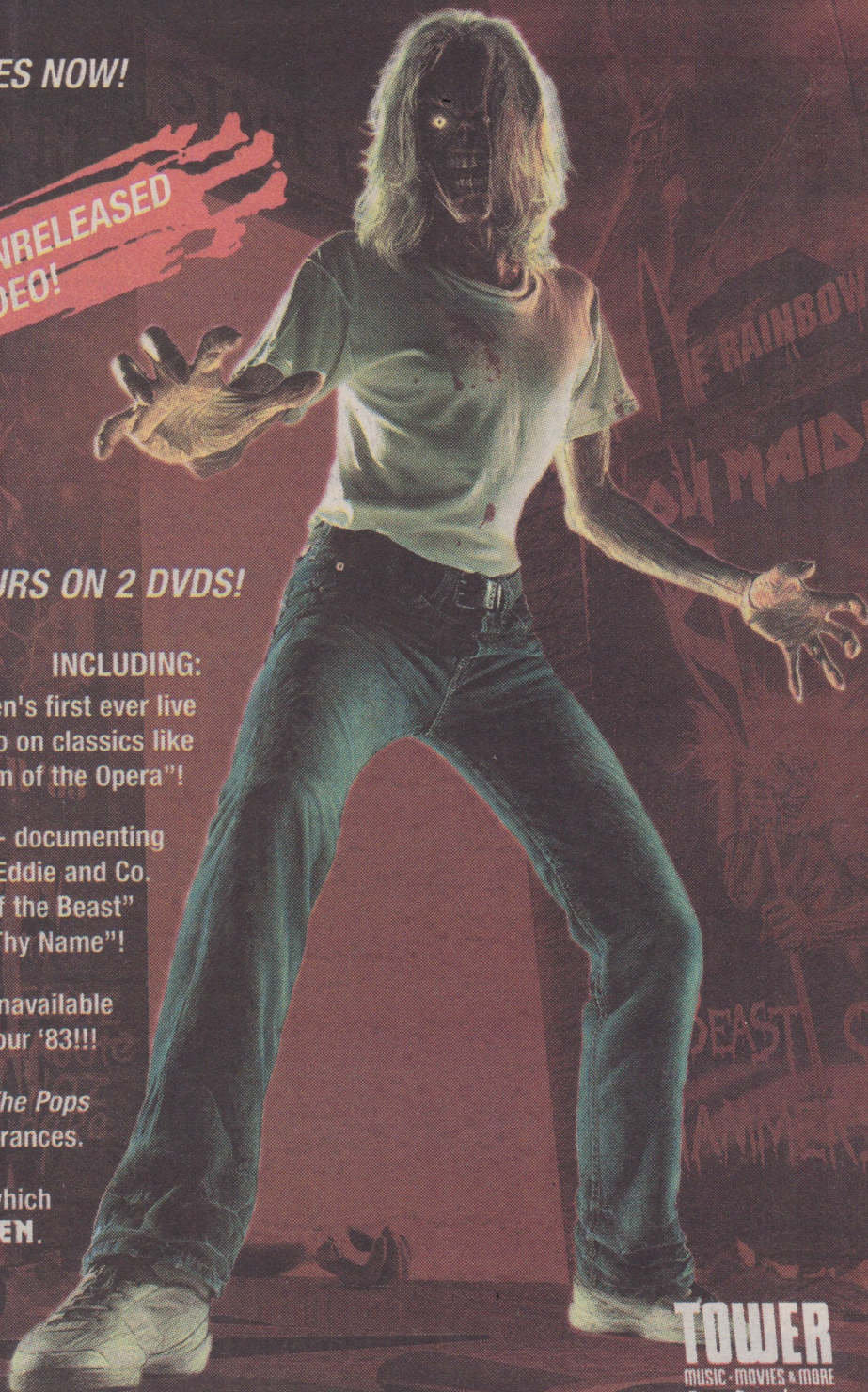
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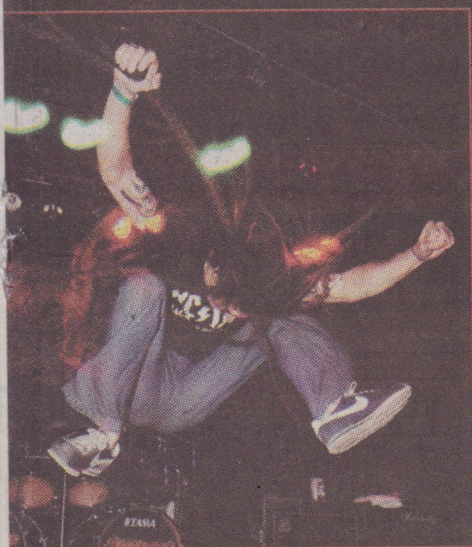
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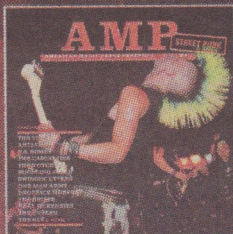
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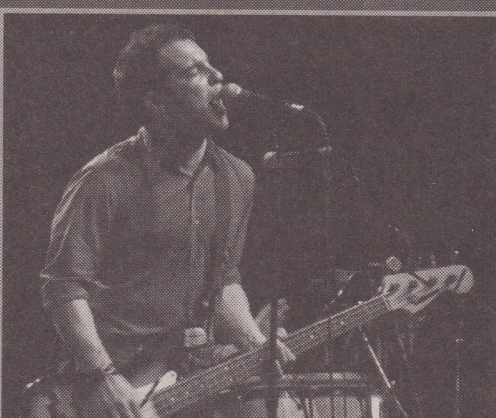
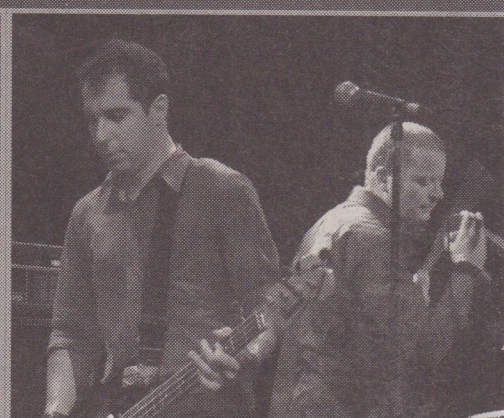
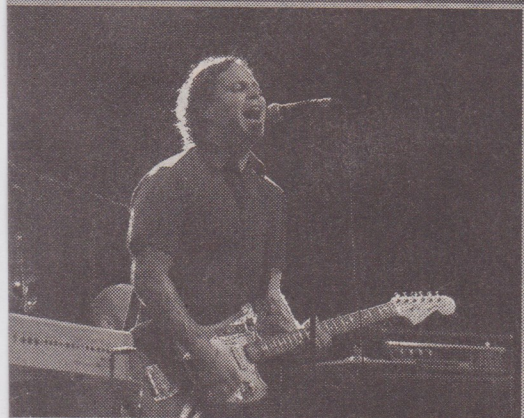
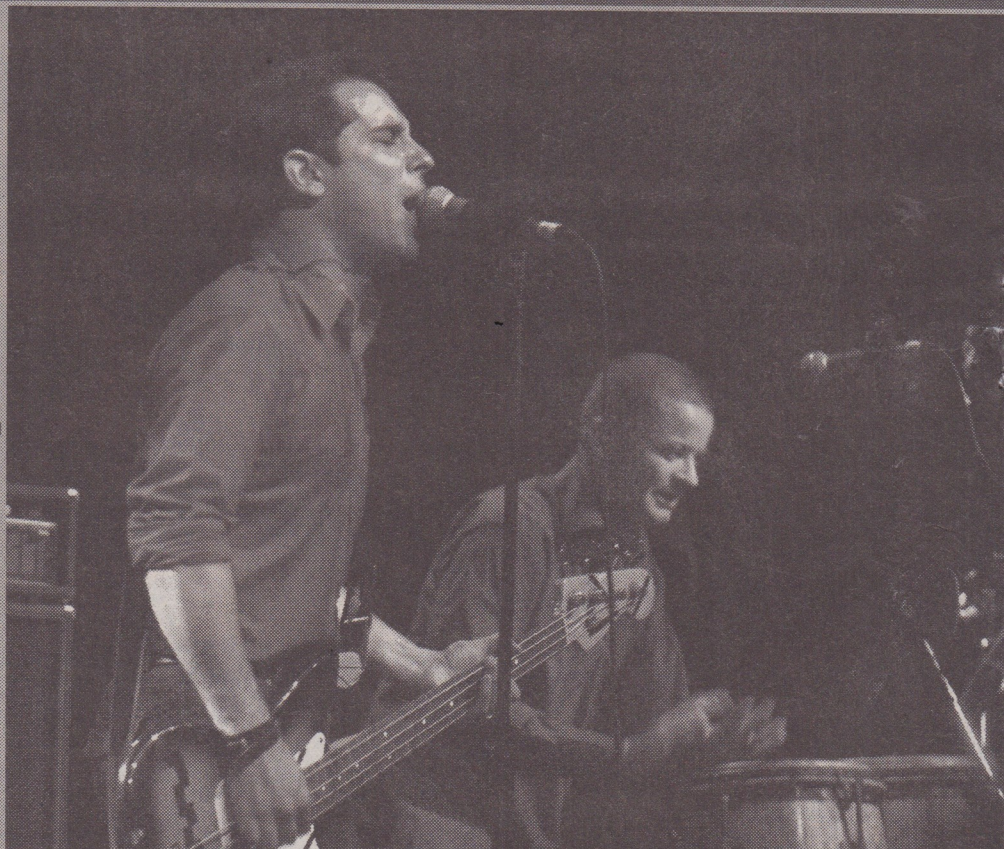
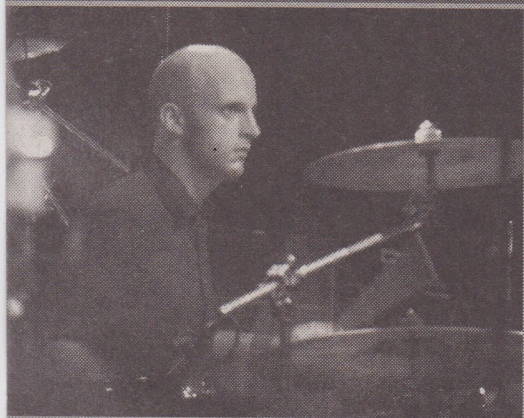
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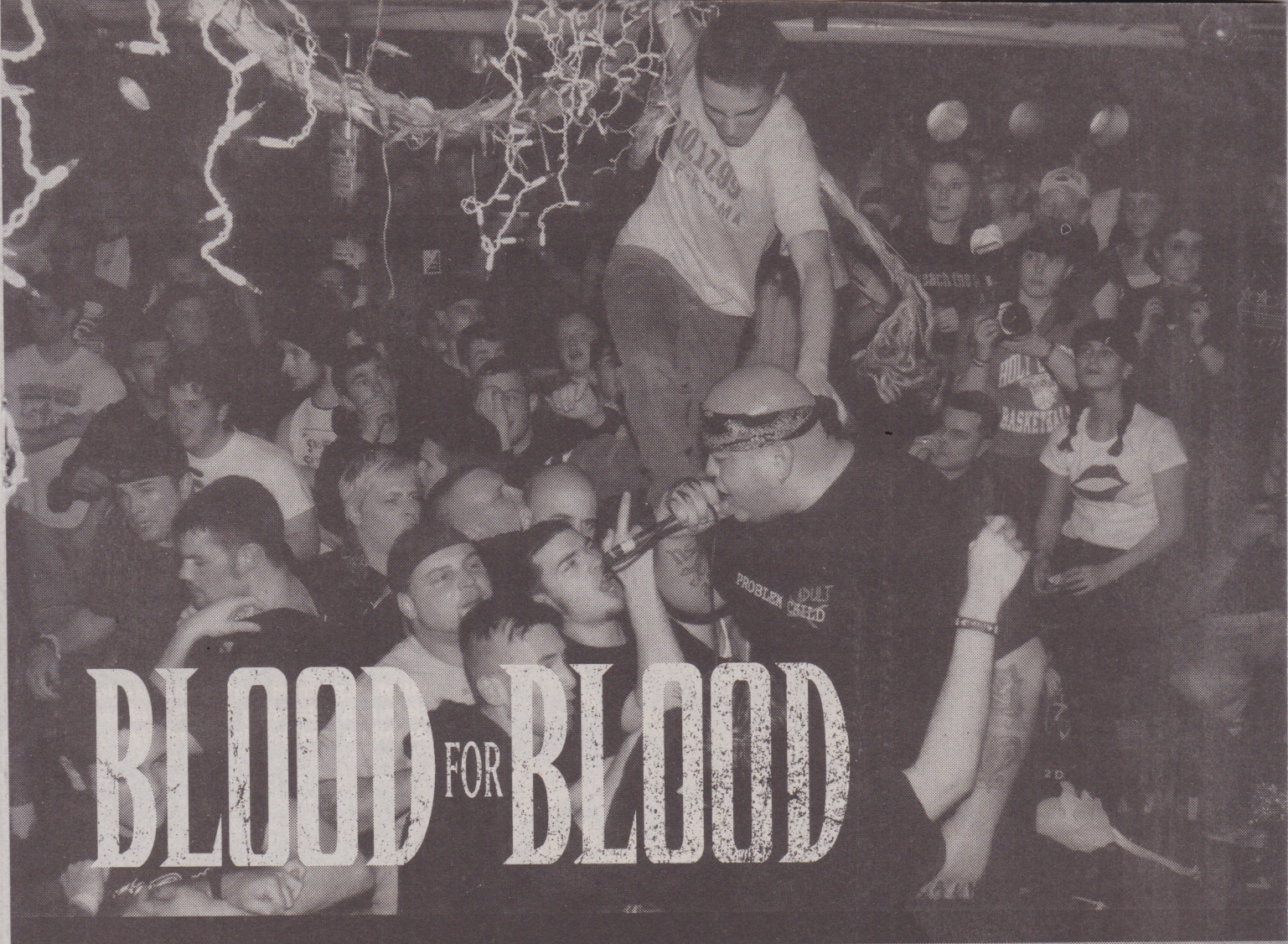
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RADIO 4

LIVE AT THE FILLMORE, SAN FRANCISCO / PHOTOS BY JOHN JOH





BLOOD FOR BLOOD

By Janelle Jones

As with any noteworthy band that stands the test of time, Boston's Blood for Blood (who next year will be celebrating their tenth anniversary) show much progression on each subsequent release. Why, take the much-respected band's latest offering, the nine-track *Serenity* (on Thorp), for example. Still showcasing unbelievably bludgeoning hardcore goodness on songs like the unsurpassable "My Jesus Mercy" and the short burst of brutality that is the title track, the guys – vocalist Erick "Buddha" Medina, guitarist "White Trash" Rob Lind, bassist Ian McFarland, and newest recruit drummer Neil Dyke – also have now proven they can deftly incorporate melody into compositions as well without sounding the least bit contrived (check out "City Boy", "A Rock n' Roll Song", or the dashes of melody that appear throughout "Hanging on the Corner", for a sample), making for quite an interesting record. Ooh! And what of their clever (and unexpected) rendition of Del Shannon's "Runaway"?! Great stuff, really... And structured around the "Serenity" prayer, replete with a spoken-word intro and outro by Rob, there's no doubt this EP is honest and profound in the ever-important lyrical department.

Here, some insight into the band and their record from the man they call Buddha.

You must discuss the new record, *Serenity*. What was the idea behind

the concept of the album?

The word "serenity" is used as a term in Narcotics Anonymous for recovering addicts. One of our band members really struggled with an oxycontin and heroin addiction. That was the reason

for the cover art [which depicts] the steps to the projects where he bought his drugs.

I totally understand your sentiments about what is happening to hardcore in "Live the Lie" – the fake-ness, no heart behind it, the trends, the bullshit. A bunch of bands have been decrying the gross state of punk/hardcore (Sick of It All, for instance). What must happen for it to, as you say, "stand for something so much more?" Can you envision this happening in the foreseeable future?

The whole hardcore/metalcore [thing] has become very trendy and more mainstream. I don't mind if a band gets famous, but I don't want every band to sound as boring or as disingenuous as the last.

What was the reason for changing the title of that song from "Hardcore 101" to "Live the Lie"?

It sounded better and in that way it wasn't limited to just hardcore.



"We're not walking around angry all the time. There [are] some [people] out there that think maybe we're too negative, but that is not the case... Listen to it first before you make an educated fucking guess to label it as tough guy crap."

We have not played them out yet.

Are you guys working on material for a full-length? If so, when do you think that might see the light of day?

Next year sometime. Not sure of any dates yet.

What happened during that period between releasing 2002's *Outlaw Anthems* and making *Serenity*?

The time flew by – I'm not really sure myself. We just played some shows, had a good time, and decided to continue Blood for Blood.

You'll soon have been around for 10 years! So, what's changed (positively and/or negatively) in the scene from when the band got together to now?


There are a lot more trends now than ever, but there are also a lot more talented bands now. For the young guys, I envy you 'cause there weren't this many pretty girls at shows when I was young. Haha.

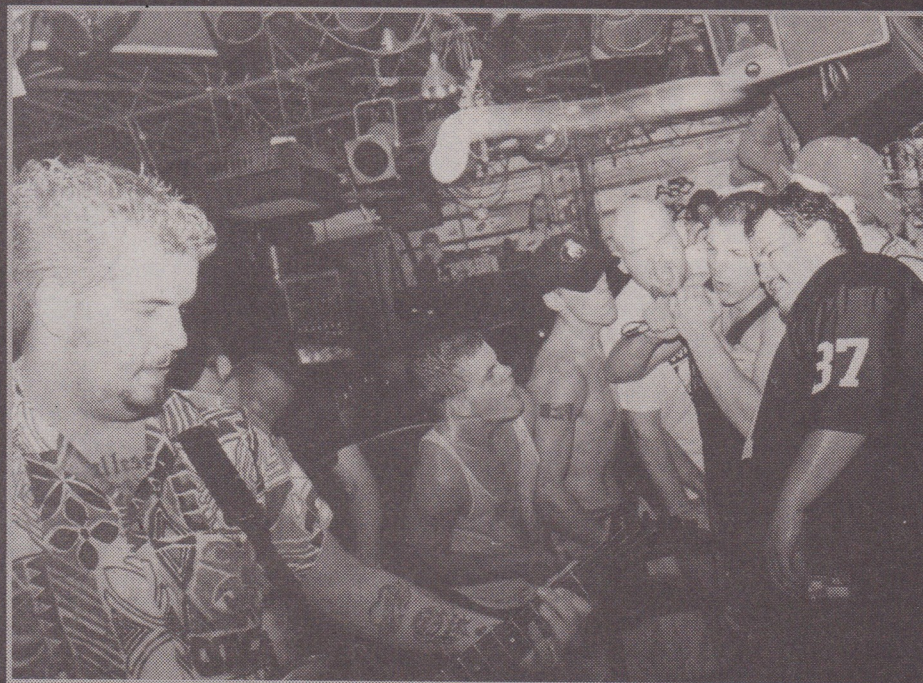
Are there any misconceptions you feel people have of the band that maybe you would like to dispel?

We're not walking around angry all the time. There [are] some [people] out there that think maybe we're too negative, but that is not the case. We write and sing about things that we know about and many of you know as well. Listen to it first before you make an educated fucking guess to label it as tough guy crap.

Anything you'd like to add in conclusion?

Blood for Blood is still here and we are not going away any time soon. Prepare yourself 'cause we're coming and we ain't stopping.

www.bloodforblood.org 



Why the decision to cover "Runaway"?

It's a great old song and we always felt that the lyrics alone sounded like a Blood for Blood song.

"My Jesus Mercy" is a pretty powerful song. Can you talk a little bit about it (musically/lyrically)? That's the *Halloween* theme thrown in there? Sounds awesome.

It is about a close personal friend, Steve, [who] is no longer with us. He was a great guy and like many of us, had his share of skeletons in the closet. His upbringing made him into this

hardcore thug that lived the criminal lifestyle. *Halloween* music was something we did on "Spit My Last Breath", which happened to be Steve's favorite song. We did it to honor him and it does sound cool.

***Serenity*, overall, is a bit more melodic. In your view, how does this record differ from your past releases?**

We've always done what we want. We finally felt comfortable with our abilities to put melodic parts in this release.

How has the new material been received at your shows?

BANDS AND THEIR VANS



AN INTERVIEW WITH JONATHON FROM BRAZIL

LET'S GET STARTED WITH SOME QUICK QUESTIONS BEFORE WE EXPLORE THE INNER-WORKINGS OF YOUR VAN.

NAME: Jonathon C Newby
BAND NAME: BRAZIL
VAN NAME: Our Lord and Savior
MAKE: Ford
MODEL: E350
YEAR: 2003

DOES THE BAND HAVE ANY INTERESTING MODIFICATIONS, I.E. LOFT, BIGGER ENGINE, DIAMOND WINDOWS, FANCY PAINT? DID YOU DO THEM?

There are a few food-based smudges we added over the past couple of weeks that bring out the van's inner personality and flair. There are also a couple of mysterious nicks in the exterior paint that have appeared since we bought it that we feel add a balance to the overall feng shui, and help to align our chakras.

WHERE DID YOU GET IT?

All-American Ford in Hackensack, NJ.

IS THERE ANY HISTORY BEHIND THE VAN?

It was bought in a desperate 30 minute deliberation after our previous van started coughing up blood from the transmission outside CBGBs while we were on tour with Sparta.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?

3 months.

HOW MANY MILES HAVE YOU PUT ON IT?

We started with 17K, now it has 40K.

WHERE DO YOU PLAN ON TAKING IT (UP-COMING TOURS)?

East Coast Warped Tour, wherever the fall takes us.

IS THERE A DRIVER IN THE BAND, I.E. THE ONE WHO IS ALWAYS BEHIND THE WHEEL? WHO? WHY?

It is usually myself or James, the drummer. I do it because I'm not a very good conversationalist - and somebody's got to be writing the lyrics in their head...

CAN/DO ALL OF YOU SLEEP IN THE VAN?

Having been on Warped Tour for two weeks, we have since discovered that this is now possible.



ANY INTERESTING SLEEPING STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, I.E. DREAMS, SEX, ETC.?

To my knowledge no one has had sex nor jerked off in the van. I haven't had many dreams about the van either.

DO YOU OR ANYONE IN THE BAND DO THE MAINTENANCE? IF SO, TO WHAT EXTENT?

We maintain our van religiously - oil changes, tune ups, tire rotations, trans service, etc. Our van maintenance schedule is written on stone tablets from heaven.

TELL ME ABOUT THE WORST VAN RELATED HORROR STORY, I.E. FIRE, ACCIDENT, HIT A DEER, ETC.

We've killed about 3 vans in our band history. So far, no dead band members. Each incident was horribly inconvenient in its own right, leaving us stranded in some god-forsaken Area

51/Deliverance type area, losing money like it was water.

DOES THE BAND HAVE ANY VAN RULES? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEY?

No drinks without lids, de-trash the van at every gas stop, and abso-fucking-lutely NO drunk driving.

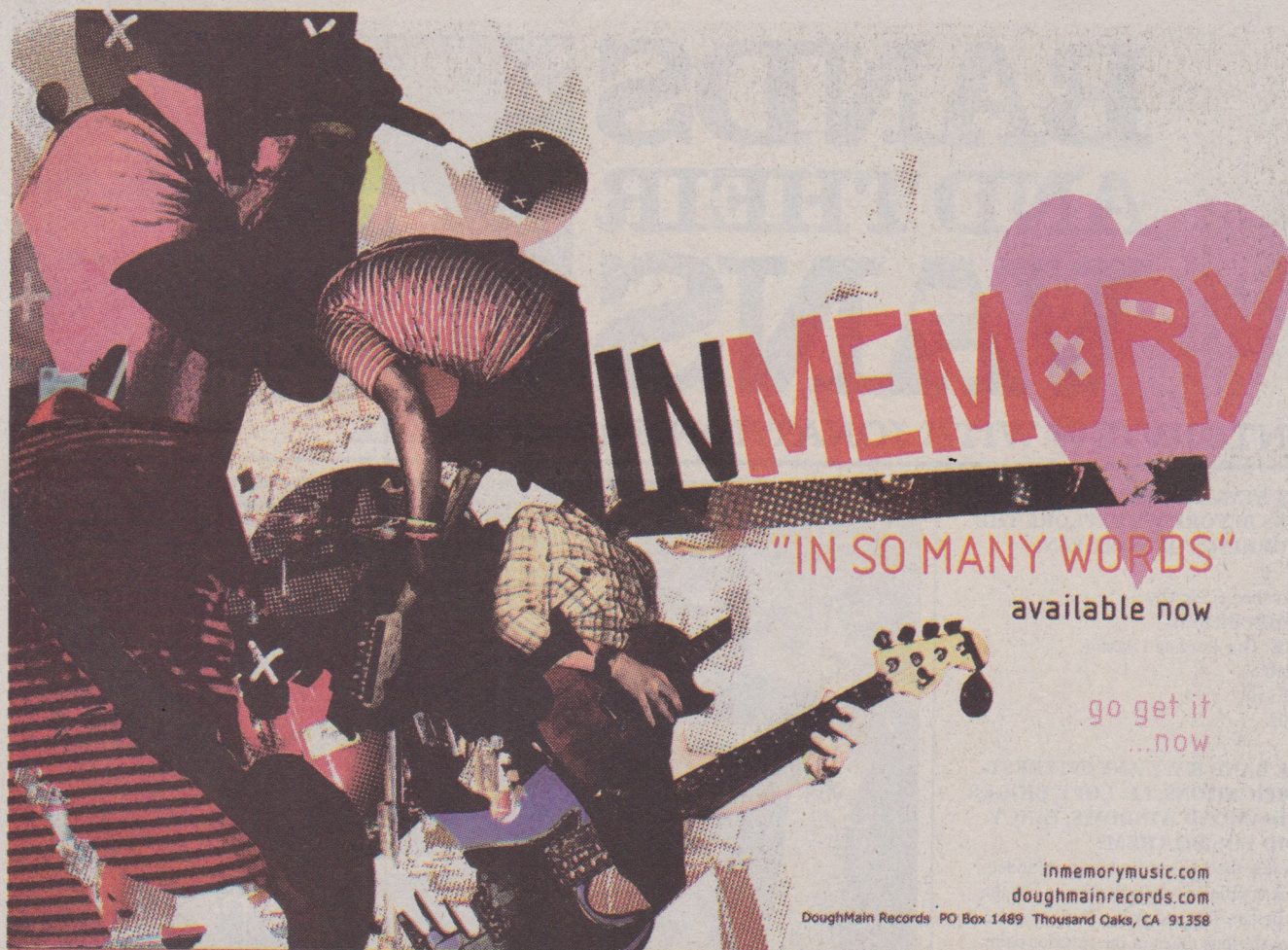
ANY ADVICE FOR THOSE BANDS WHO DON'T HAVE A VAN AND ARE LOOKING TO BUY ONE?

If you're going to tour hard, don't be afraid to put down the money for something newer. You need to have something you can rely on - it is, after all, a work vehicle. Nothing kills show energy like van worries.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DREAM VAN?

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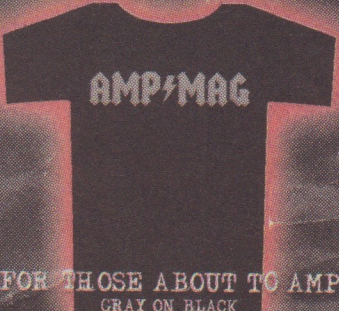
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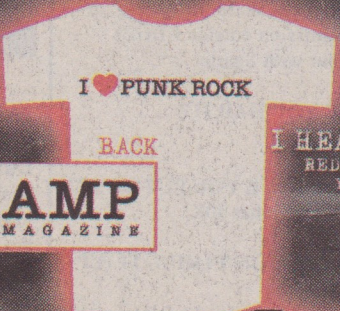
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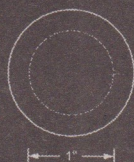
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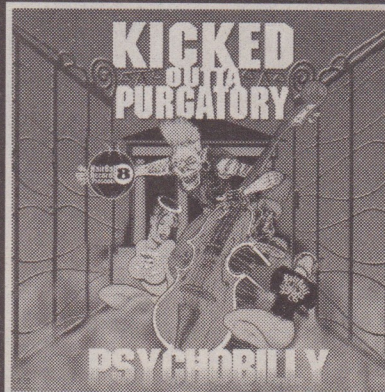
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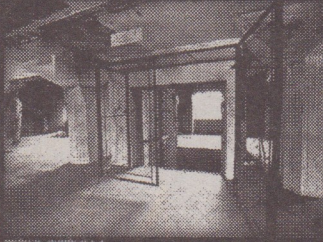
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THE DISTANCE



By Matt Cote / Photo By David Apuzzo

Every so often, you hear a band that just blows you away. They're the band that brings something new to a genre that is all too often plagued by so many bands, drudging up the same old sounds, playing a played-out sound and introducing nothing new. The Distance is one of those bands. Playing fast, aggressive hardcore with ample amounts of melody, they're not afraid to take a familiar sound and make it their own – to take chances and try something new – to push the boundaries of their own sound and see how far they can take it. Right now is a strange time for the punk rock and hardcore scene. We're at a point in time when just about every band making a name for themselves are writing songs with the underlying idea being 'how many units can we push if we add a pop part here, and a scream part here?' The Distance will remind you that there are bands out there who write music for the right reasons – because they constantly strive to reach the next level, to write their own perfect song, and to answer their own endless desire to fulfill their passion for music by furthering their art. The Distance is doing things that I wish all bands could do, or wish all bands WOULD do. Jay, who sings for the Distance, took some time out recently to do this interview.

So your EP has been out for almost about 7 months. You've been touring your asses off in support of it. How has this past year gone for The Distance?

Ah, dude, everything has been awe-

some. Honestly, I think it's gone beyond what we thought it would. We've shared the stage with some of the best bands in hardcore right now, and just the reaction to the EP and all the work that Bridge Nine has done and all the work

that we have done has really paid off, and it's just been great. And we couldn't ask for better timing on everything or to play better shows and to play so many awesome shows, really were blessed with everything that came out of that.

As if the past year of touring isn't enough, you get to play the Sheer Terror reunion show at CBGBs in October. How did you wind up landing on that show?

It was pretty crazy. First off, just to be considered to be one of the bands was awesome. It's such a huge honor to play with a band like that, that has done so much and so many people look up to, including us. We just got really lucky – a friend of ours had a hand in booking the show and we're friends with one of the dudes from Sheer Terror, and they asked us and there was no way we were gonna turn it down. We've actually been home for like a month, but it was

"...we write for us...if you write a song thinking 'oh, what is everyone else going to think?' I don't think you'll ever write a true song coming from yourself,... You're not ever really going to show what you can do and how you feel and stuff by thinking things like that."

the one show that we were like yes, we're going to do it no matter what. So we're really excited to be a part of it, and like I said, you can't do no to a band like Sheer Terror.

Being at CBGBs and being with Sheer Terror, that's gotta rank among the top shows you guys have every played, right?

Yeah man, I mean, like I said, we've been blessed to play so many awesome shows with so many bands, but that's gotta be one of the top, definitely one of the top-five.

You have been writing for your first full length over your time on the road also, right?

Yeah, that's what we've been doing. We actually just got out of the studio after doing some demos for the record. It's a little bit different, you know, it's still heavy but we've been kind of throwing in some melodies in there, and it's really cool man. It's definitely *The Distance* still, just pushing it a little bit forward. It's definitely got some mosh, it's got fast parts, but there's definitely some melody in there and it's gonna be awesome. We're working with a producer soon - I wish I could say now who it's going to be, but it's going to be awesome. It's going to be good - it's mostly already written, we're maybe four or five songs away, it's gonna be like 13 songs, so it's gonna be really cool.

So how does the songwriting process usually work with you guys - is it usually up to any one person, or is it more of a group effort?

It's definitely more of a group effort. We all come from such different backgrounds as far as music goes. I mean, I'm into like everything from *Taking Back Sunday* to *Hatebreed* to *American Nightmare*. And that's the same thing for everyone in the band. So definitely when we get together it's a melting pot of ideas, and it's been really cool. Usually, I have a little input with the music and I write all the lyrics myself, but it's definitely a creative thing, it's definitely a group effort. I'm really lucky to have dudes who understand what I want to do, and I understand what they want to do. It's going to be a really kick-ass record and we're really excited about it.

So you recently released a limited-edition colored vinyl cover of Dramarama's 'Anything, Anything.' How did that recording come about, and how has the reaction been to the song?

Actually I'm really excited you asked about that. When I was younger that was one of my favorite songs, and we were in the studio doing some recording for the split with *With Honor* coming out, and I decided right there that I really wanted to do it, so that's what we did, and I was really happy how it came out. So I started a little label that is actually going to be a subdivision of my other label, which is *Stillborn*, and I started this little label called *Armor Music* to just kind of do cool vinyl stuff, and I have a couple other things coming out on it, this band *Signs of Hope* from Connecticut, I'm going to do another *Distance 7"* after this, but this was kind of my way to get back to some of the smaller bands and do projects that I couldn't really do through *Stillborn*. So, you know, we did this *Dramarama* thing as the first thing, and the reaction has been surprisingly awesome. We were a little nervous, and I think the direction of that song - the LP has elements of that song too, while still keeping it fast and moshy. It's definitely going to be like a really broad record. I really don't want to pigeon-hole us or narrow us down since we all listen to a lot of different kinds of music. This was just another one of our crazy ideas, and we're just really lucky that the kids who like the band accepted it, and people who had never heard the band we really into it so that opened up a lot more opportunities for us, so we were really happy to get that out there and have people accept it. It's always hard - you don't want to bum out your fans and the kids who stuck by you. And I know for a band like us, we wouldn't have anything if it wasn't for the kids who really stick behind us and really back us up. So we were really nervous, but finding out that they were willing to back us up no matter what was really an awesome feeling. We really couldn't ask for anything more from the kids that like us, and we appreciate them so much.

I assume that along with the limited edition cover and packaging to look like a Dramarama release, it's become a hit with the record collectors. Is that true?

Yeah, we did a really small pressing, only 500. We did 100 on pink, which we only sold on the West Coast when we toured with *Some Kind of Hate* and *Outbreak*. And then we did another 400 on yellow. We hand-picked a couple for *Posi-Numbers*, and I've always found vinyl collecting to be really awesome. This is where we come from; we're regular hardcore kids, so we're totally into that. We're into making the covers, and

we're into making each release different, and make them a little more special. That kind of makes me feel special that you follow a band and you're able to get that, and you're able to do something for the kids that like your band, and this is a really great way to do that. I don't know if we've ever been a big record-collector band, but I guess we'll find out when *Bridge Nine* puts out the vinyl for the EP and see how the colored thing goes, but we've always been kind of into that, and we try to do as much cool stuff as possible. Like I said, that's where we come from, you know what I mean? I know what it's like to get a special pressing of a record and stuff, you know?

You mentioned that the full-length is heading in a slightly different direction than the EP. Do you get nervous thinking that the kids who have backed you might not be there if you change your style at all in the slightest bit?

We don't try to think about things like that, like I said, we like to think that people who like our band are going to stick by us regardless. You know, we write for us, you know? I think if you write a song thinking 'oh, what is everyone else going to think?' I don't think you'll ever write a true song coming from yourself, you know? You're not ever really going to show what you can do and how you feel and stuff by thinking things like that. And I know for us, we come from so many different backgrounds of music and we've all been in so many different bands, when it comes time to write an LP and you're talking 13 songs, there's definitely going to be a little bit of a change. I think so far from what we've done, the *Dramarama* thing is one of our favorite things we've done, so knowing that kids liked it, it made it a little easier for us to add a little more melody, slow some things down. You know, not everything has to be super fast and super mosh. I mean, we're not really worried. We like to think that the kids who like us are going to stick by us, and the ones that aren't, it's unfortunate but you just kinda hope that they're gonna.

Also in the works, before the full-length, is a split with the always amazing With Honor, coming out on Martyr Records. How many songs are you guys gonna have on here?

We did three and *With Honor* did three. We were actually really lucky, we had Kevin Baker from *Hope Conspiracy* come down and sing on one of the tracks, and that's one of my favorite

"A lot of things suffer from doing both, relationships with your family, your girlfriend, and friends and stuff, but those are the moments that you really know why you're doing it."

songs. He was actually supposed to be on the EP from Bridge Nine, but due to timing, we weren't able to work it out, so we were really excited to have him come down and sing on this. The stuff is still in the vein of *Your Closest Enemies*, so we're really excited about that.

For people who might not be familiar with With Honor, how would you describe their music?

Well I'm not really impartial because I put out their new record. I consider them a cross between, say Corneback Kid and Bane, and they're probably the best dudes in the whole world and probably one of my favorite bands to work with. You know, again, I've been blessed to have really awesome bands on the label and they're one of my favorites. But they're great dudes and I think people who haven't heard them yet are going to be really psyched on their songs on this. It's definitely their best songs so far.

I assume this came together since With Honor are on Stillborn, a label you co-run. Whose idea was it, and how did Martyr get involved?

Well, it was my idea. Right after I signed With Honor, and both of us being from Connecticut, I had the idea of a way to help both bands out. At the time we started planning it, both bands were totally unknown. I've been friends with Steve at Martyr for years, and his being a new label, and me doing a label, I was able to help him out along the way, and I really wanted to give him a release that was going to be able to do something for him as well as help us out. So it turned out to be a perfect match that all three of us were able to get together was awesome. And the artwork for this thing is crazy, it's done by Jeremy who's done stuff for Daughters and stuff like that, and it's just crazy. It's this huge digi-pak that folds out into this double cross and I mean, you've gotta see this thing, it's amazing and we're so happy that it's coming out.

How have your experiences with Stillborn helped you with your own band?

I've actually always managed to keep everything separate. When *The Distance* first came out, I didn't tell anyone that I was in the band. I had been in another band that had toured and stuff. So we put out the demo without band members, so no one knew, we just wanted to get real feedback. So I always try to keep everything separate, just because I don't want to be one of those dudes who uses my Stillborn stuff to help out my own thing, I'd rather do everything

on my own, and at least I know that everything we've got we've got on our own and we've worked really hard for. So it's much more rewarding than cashing in a favor, because that thing would be much easier for me to do. Having your best friend be the best friend of Headbanger's Ball, and stuff like that, it's really easy to cash in on favors, but we've always prided ourselves on working really hard and everything we've gotten has been done the old-fashioned way. Definitely there's no hype, and there were a lot of demos given away for free in the beginning, so I've always tried to keep in really separate. I like that we've worked just as hard as any other band, and we'll continue to do so.

So what's better, playing music as the band, or releasing music as the label?

Oh man, dude, that's such a tough thing. I've been doing Stillborn now for probably 7 years, so before I had done another band called Voice of Reason and we toured and had done some stuff, and after the band broke up, just the business aspects of the label were really exciting to me. To be able to help bands – because when I was like 15 I was booking shows and helping bands from everyone – so it was just another outlet and allowed me to push something a little bit further. Putting out so many records, it made me miss playing, so that's what made me start another band. So I don't really have a favorite, I love them both equally. With the label, I get to work with so many great bands and so many great people, and the same with the band. We get to play so many awesome shows and work with awesome people like Matt Pike, and the dudes at Bridge Nine, so it's a good feeling. It's a good balance of both things, and I'm so lucky to have both because it's something I wish everyone could experience.

What has been the most satisfying aspect of running a label?

Honestly dude, I think the best for me was when I got With Honors demo. They were from Connecticut and no one really knew them yet, and just watching them kind of get bigger and bigger, and getting to tour with them and see that all over and become this big thing, and that to me was really satisfying because I really believe in that band and I still do and I would do anything for those dudes. So for me, just being able to watch them go from being this little Connecticut band to being one of the bigger bands right now, it's such a great feeling. Man, like I said, I just can't explain it. Being able to tour with them, and seeing them in places like Nashville

and Georgia, and seeing kids feel really passionately about it, those are the days that when you're at the office until like 11 o'clock at night, that's the reason you're doing it. A lot of things suffer from doing both, relationships with your family, your girlfriend, and friends and stuff, but those are the moments that you really know why you're doing it. It's something that, like I said, I feel so passionately about both things, I could never pick, you know?

What are the chances that The Distance will eventually release something on Stillborn?

Well, I'm not going to say it's not ever going to happen, but I probably will again just keep things separate just because I would never want the bands on Stillborn to feel like I'm maybe pushing my band's stuff a little bit more. I'm not saying that it will never happen, but as the immediate future, probably not. Not at least until some of my other bands get a little bit more established, then I would maybe put something out. But for now, they're their own separate entities, and there's never a problem, and no one will ever second-guess my decision about a band, and I like that. All the bands on Stillborn get along really well, even though Stillborn is so different, we're like a family, and that vibe is so awesome, so to be able have that and keep that going is something that I really love. So I'm not saying never ever, probably not in the near future, and not any time soon. Then again, you could ask me next week and that could change.

So once the writing and recording process is completed, do you plan to get back out on the road, or are you going to take some well deserved time off?

You know man, going back to last year, we were gone pretty much from November of 2003 through August of this year. We toured so much. We're home right now, and originally we were going to take the rest of the year off, but we're already kicking around some ideas for tours towards the end of the year, but we're hoping for a January/February full tour and hopefully stay out again for the whole year, and maybe even more for this LP because this really is a big deal for us, and it really is the one thing we love to do the most. We don't mind driving, and we love touring so much, so a couple things might happen later in the year, but as of now, I'd say probably towards January. But you never know.

Check out the latest on *The Distance* at www.thedistance.net

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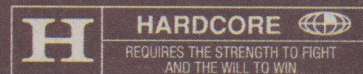


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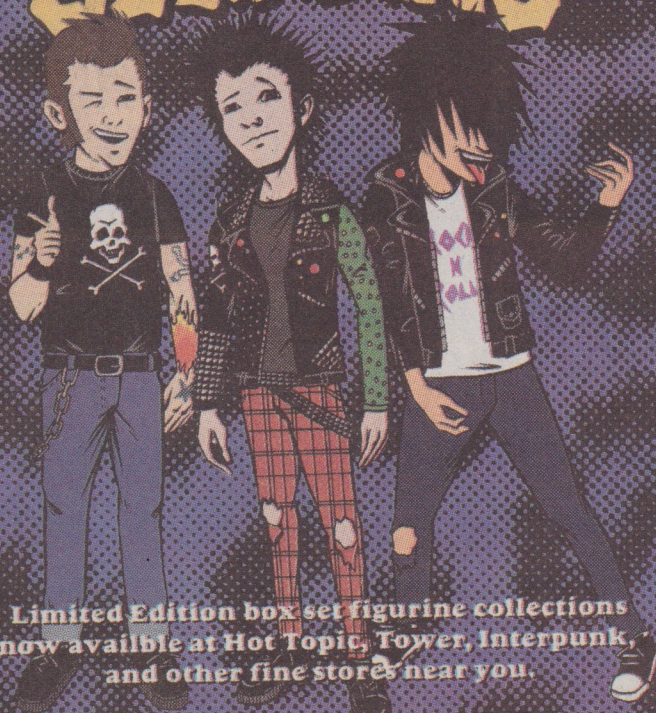


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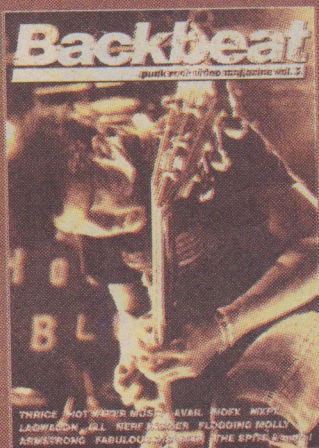
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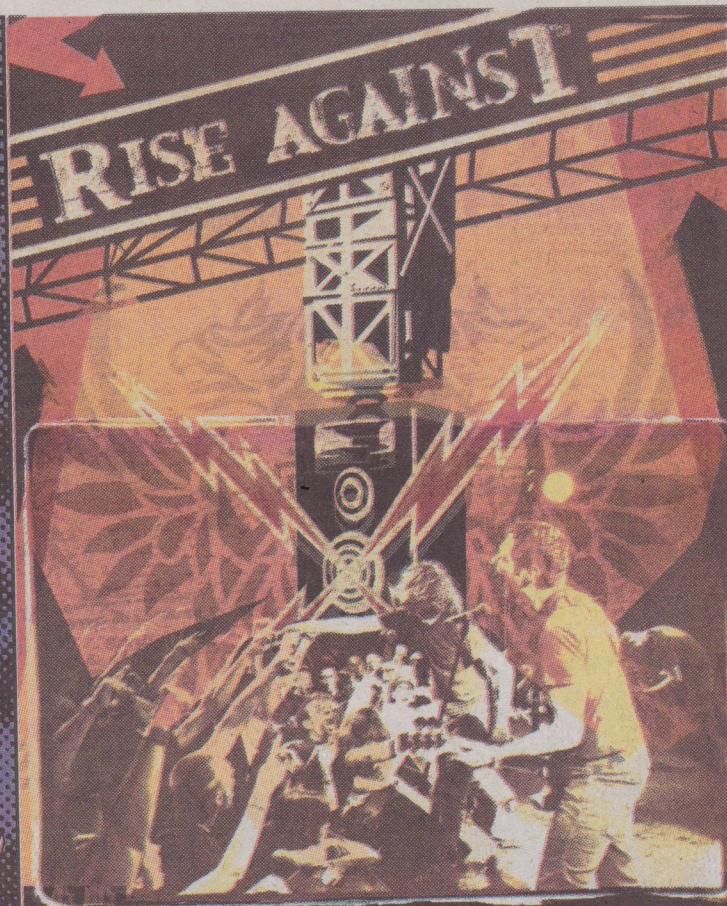


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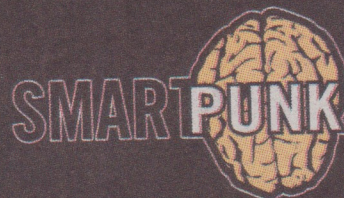


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JIMMY EAT WORLD

Interview By Scott Heisel / Interjections By Megan.

The phrase "I dunno, man, I'm just the bass player," came up an ungodly number of times in the first five minutes of my interview with Jimmy Eat World bassist Rick Burch. Fortunately, over the next 45 minutes, Burch let his guard down and discussed a wide variety of topics with us, from the band's new album, *Futures*, to the ever-important "pirates or ninjas?"





So, you guys did some pre-release shows scattered around the Midwest and such, what inspired you to do these shows as opposed to, say, your home town?

Uh...
Well all right, see you later.

Thanks, great interview. [laughs]
Yeah thanks, that was all I needed.
No uh, it just seemed like we had... they asked us to do this show here today and so we figured why not do a few other shows in the area since we're here, you know what I mean?
Well I know you played the Metro, I'm from Illinois, actually, and that's a really great place.

The Metro is always fun.
I saw you there three years ago with Hey Mercedes and that was an amazing show. Is that one of those places that you want to keep playing, the smaller, a little more intimate venues?

Yeah, that was a lot of fun. It was good to be in the Metro, it's like home. We've played there so many times over the years, it's very comfortable and you're right there with the audience and the balcony, so it's a cool place.

Obviously, there's going to be a more grand-scale tour now that the album has dropped, do you guys have plans for that yet? Do you know what you're doing or where you're going and who with?

No it's not lined up yet and yeah, it's still up in the air, what the details of it...

Do you plan on sticking with the more intimate venues or do you want to go for the bigger ones? I know in Chicago, you did the Riv...

Yeah, we did the Riv...
...for two nights; what are you look-

ing at?

We don't want to turn too many people away, you know? So we just want to accommodate as many people as want to come see us but at the same time you don't book yourself at...

The Fireside Bowl?

No, not...

Like the Aragon?

Yeah, the Aragon, and like there's five hundred people in the front... [laughs]

I saw you with Weezer before too, in a big arena. Do you feel like you translate well? Those are some of the bigger shows that you've played in America. Is that something that you're trying to aspire to? Do you want to become that kind of arena band where you have 10,000 kids coming to see you?

We only want as many people to come as want to come. It wouldn't hurt our feelings if we were in the Metro for the rest of our lives, but it wouldn't hurt our feelings if we were at the bigger places.

So you think that it would translate well?

Yeah, I think it could go across.
The new album *Futures*, came out on October 19 on Interscope. "Jen" was on the original release, but we got a new copy a few weeks ago and it was not on there, so what was the reason for that song being cut from the album?

It's just kind of the one that doesn't really fit in so we just decided to save, to take it off the main album release but it will be released on like some B-sides or certain things.

If you listen to the album, there's more soul-baring lyrics, compared to, say, the last album. There are songs like "Drugs or Me" which is directly addressing the problem of

somebody who is on drugs. Do you find that your style for lyricism has affected your music changing for the new album?

I don't know, it is what it is. I have no hand in the lyrics, unless [Jim] comes out with something totally outlandish, but he wouldn't, he would never so, yeah...

Does the music come from the lyrics or do the lyrics come from the music?

It usually comes music first, rarely, well, it's not fair to say music first because I know that Jim has a journal/idea notebook thing that, with tons of stuff in it that he's been writing in for ten years so some of these song ideas, the theory underneath what the song is about could be eight years old but just now the right song came to put it to. The idea can be a lot older than the music, but usually the music comes and then melody and lyrics tie into that.

With the whole recording process, you took pretty much a three year, although obviously it wasn't a break. You were touring pretty heavily for *Bleed American*, but there was definitely a downtime where people were wondering what was going on. You were working with Mark Trombino and then all of a sudden that was all scrapped and you were working with Gil Norton for the album. What happened? What caused the separation?

We toured so much on *Bleed American* and we finished and when we were touring it was kind of our mindset was constantly looking at the calendar, "Okay, we've got to do this this week and where are we going to be next week, what's going to be going on next month" and you're always just kind of churning and anticipating

and filling what's going to happen coming up and then when the touring was over our minds were still working that way so we kind of were, "Okay, in a couple months we'll plan on going into the studio and start working on the new album" and we never stopped and just took a break and just let ourselves relax. We thought that we did, we took a few months and did whatever but we really needed about six months and we started recording before that six months and we realized in the middle of that recording that we weren't ready and so we stepped away from it again and cleared our heads and came back at it.

What drew you to Gil Norton over anybody else?

Well first of all, his...

Pedigree?

Right, the stuff he'd produced, and I can't think of the word right now...

His resume?

Yeah, right, his resume.

What's your favorite record that Gil Norton's done?

Oh I don't know there are so many you know, The Pixies, any one of those.

Did you feel kind of intimidated to work with him?

At first, yeah.

I know with Mark Trombino, you guys were the band that was associated with him whenever his name came up.

He's the only guy we've ever worked with.

And you are definitely the band that put his name on the map as a producer. He did *Drive Like Jehu*, but for production aspect, you were the first big band that really moved along with him. Do you feel like going into the presence of Gil Norton that maybe, not humbled the band, but just kind of put a different perspective on things?

It was definitely a different perspective. It was a whole new, just a different way of working and it was actually refreshing and he whooped us into shape I guess you could say and pulled a lot of things out of us that needed strong rope to get out so he was, he really dedicated. I couldn't believe the level of dedication. At times I thought that he was more dedicated than we were.

Do you feel like this is a relationship that is going to continue on for future albums or...

You never know, it was also a good experience because it showed us there's so many people out there and if this was such a good experience who's to say that someone else couldn't be, we couldn't be just as beneficial from a relationship with someone else?

Is there anyone that you're just dying to work with in the way of recording?

Oh I don't know, not really, not especially.

Have people come to you and said, "I really want to work with you guys. I want to put you to tape?"

Actually, no.

Nobody likes you at all, huh? Always

a bridesmaid.

Yeah, exactly. [laughs] But with the new album, its interesting to listen to the new album because instead of being a song and then a song and then a song, it really is the epitome of an album. It really flows from track to track. There are definitely relationships between the songs and the people in the songs. There really is no "The Middle" on the album. Was that something that you made a conscious effort, because I mean you could've easily knocked out another dozen "The Middles." Is that something that you guys felt like, "Let's not try to take the easy way out?"

We didn't consciously say we're not going to do that but at the same time we didn't say "Okay, this month we've got to come up with five of those and pick the best one." We never... and that's how "The Middle" came about—it was just a song in a batch of songs and it ended up doing what it did and so we kind of took the approach of doing what we do and it's what it is.

You chose "Pain" as the first single from the new album, and that and "Just Tonight" are probably the two songs that are the most distant from "The Middle" and the poppy aspect that most people probably know your band for. Was that a conscious choice?

It's just kind of to remind people that we are a rock band. Put that foot first.

That's really the heaviest you guys have been since maybe even *Static Prevails*. That's the first time really as a single that people have seen you and that kind of more aggressive side of the band, so that was a conscious choice on you guys' part. Are you looking ahead for new singles? What are some songs that you think would make potential singles?

Oh, I don't know, "23." [laughs]

That's seven minutes long, it's all right.

It's tough to say. I like "Nothingwrong" a lot, I think it really rocks and it's a good song.

You worked with Liz Phair on "Work"—is there any chance of that seeing the light of day?

Yeah, a lot of people are talking about that, so that's definitely a possibility.

How did that even come about?

When Jim was writing the song and we were writing the song he had a sound in his head which was stemming from one of her songs on *Exile in Guyville* ["Divorce Song"] that was kind of the melody in his mind, he could hear her voice on it, it was kind of stemming from listening to her, he just brought it up one time and it turns out that this guy that we know knows her.

So it was just total coincidence?

Yeah it was like, sure ask her, why not, if she says no then we're in the same place we're in now, it's not going to kill us if it doesn't happen. But it was really cool, she came down and she belted it out and I think it adds a great—a little sparkle to the song.

In past tours you've had Rachel from That Dog performing with you guys and covering a lot of the female vocals and auxiliary instruments, so on the new album you have a lot of songs that feature female vocals, whether it's Liz Phair or anybody else.

It's actually, that's the only female is on "Work." That's all Jim.

Are you serious? Like in "Futures?" Really? No way, you're totally messing with me.

I swear.

She's the only one on the entire album?

Right.

That's incredible.

Jim's on all those backups, he really worked on his range.

Are you planning on having someone come back on the road with you guys to cover that?

It always would be nice but it's really hard to find someone, it sounds stupid to say because I'm sure there's like, a thousand people that would be like "Oh yeah, I'll do it man, sure!" but I'm not sure of that, but I would...

But tonight, it's just the four of you onstage?

Right, it's just the four of us and it probably will be for the whole tour but I don't know, you never know.

Do you ever feel like because you add all of those extra things in the recording process that, on all of your albums, going back to *Clarity* and even to *Static Prevails* there are always going to be those extra little things that you always say, "Well can they pull that off live?" Do you feel like doing that kind of extra studio instrumentation and tweaking makes you step it up a notch for the live performance? How do you combat something like "Lucky Denver Mint" which is all about drum loops and stuff like that, how do you take on that aspect?

Sometimes you have to just step away from the studio version and think about the core of the song and almost make a whole other version. We're throwing that around with some of the songs.

Like what?

Like "Night Drive" could you imagine trying to have four dudes play that song? There's like ninety-eight tracks or something. [laughs]

It could happen

Yeah.

Get the lighters all up there.

Of course.

The audience would be all into it man, get some slow dancing, a disco ball.

[laughs] No, we definitely want to get that song ready for the stage, you know everything, we really want to play every song, we have a good handful ready right now.

You have just a huge back catalog that's gone back over your singles and all sorts of compilations and stuff like that, stuff that hasn't been heard by a lot of people. Do you feel like it's necessary, I know when I saw you on the tour with The Promise Ring and Recover that you incorporated a lot of *Clarity* into the

set list which I thought was really neat that you're exposing all these new people to this album that came before it. Do you feel like now you've established yourself, where you can have two or three songs from *Static Prevails*, two or three songs from *Clarity*, two or three songs from *Bleed American*, two or three songs from the new album?

Yeah, we definitely are trying to include the whole thing.

Do you plan on going back to *Static Prevails* and stuff like that? You know, "Seventeen," for example.

Yeah, definitely, that's what we were talking about today, we've never played that live.

Really?

Never.

That would be an awesome thing to hear.

Yeah I think so too, it would be like a new song, cause to most people, we haven't performed that since you know, it was recorded, essentially, eight years ago.

What about "Opener," would

"Opener" ever see the light of day?

Oh, I love that song.

See, that's my favorite song that you guys have ever written.

Oh man, there are so many good ones and just... oh yeah, I'm not saying that there are so many good...

Every song we've ever...

"Man our band is so great," no I'm not, I'm just...

This is for you to toot your own horn.

No I definitely don't, I'm not trying to... I don't know, their bass player is a total dork. [laughs]

Do you ever feel that you're kind of boxed in? Especially since the last album you've had a huge surge in the fan base, do you feel like you can't perform those more obscure songs? Like "No Sensitivity" still seems to pop up a lot but something like "Opener" or "Seventeen" or anything off the singles collection. Do you find that's something that you say "the crowd's not really going to respond to that?"

Yeah, sometimes some of the songs just don't sound as, don't come across live, and do it justice, but we're going back and listening to things and thinking of new approaches and you know, taking another crack at them.

Do you plan on switching your set list up a lot on tour? Or do you pretty much stick to the same 18 songs a night?

There are so many songs now, like you said, that we have so many to choose from that yeah I think we're going to have a few main A, B and C sets and we'll even mix into those. So it'll be pretty much a different set every night, so if you do two nights in Chicago, you can come to both shows and see different songs?

Yeah, we'll mix it up, we want to make that happen.

Clarity has been out for five years and it's an album that, while not strongly received at the time, has been one of those benchmark albums for a genre labeled as "emo" now. When you left the studio in

1998, did you say to yourself, "Hell yeah?" Did you know that it was going to be the album of your career?

No, we didn't know that, but we were walking away saying "Hell yeah" because we were definitely proud of it.

Did you ever think that it would be this kind of revered album like *Pinkerton*?

Wow, you're putting me in some serious company there, I know what you're saying though, people will come up to us and say "Thank you so much for making *Clarity*," it's such a great thing.

That was the first album that I ever bought on its release date.

Really, wow.

Capitol sent me a little postcard that had the squares on it that said "Jimmy Eat World, *Clarity*" and it said February 12, 1999 or something on it and I remember going to the store and I couldn't find it and the only band I could find was Jimmie's Chicken Shack records and I was so bummed.

Oh man, I'm sorry.

I had to go to every single store in town and then I found it. Everyone seems to have their own little story with discovering that album. Has it ever crossed your mind to do a performance of just the album start to finish? Is that something that's ever been on the plate?

Wow, no, we've never talked about that but that'd be... I'll bring it up with the boys. [laughs]

Right now you have four proper albums out right now, counting *Futures*. If you were only remembered for one thing fifty years from now, which album would it be?

Everything, you can't just say one thing.

But I'm asking you to.

If you're asking me right now, the thing I'm most proud of is the thing we just did. You know?

On *Futures*, there's a lot of going back to the sound effects and the dynamics of *Clarity*: the swirling guitars, the reverb stuff. Did you find that when you were recording it you were touching base with your previous self?

Yeah, well, we did *Clarity* and then we did *Bleed American* and making *Bleed American* we were really conscious about making the songs as to the point and no B.S. and nothing extra, just as concise and to the point as possible and that's how they were, they were just short, no fat, so to say, and with this album we didn't think that at all, we just went in and let the songs become themselves and if they needed two and a half minutes before the first vocals came in then that's it needed so that's what we did. So we just kind of let it happen on its own, which is how *Clarity* happened, too. In the past few years with the conglomeration in the music industry, DreamWorks was absorbed by Universal, did you ever feel, it's weird to say a platinum artist would feel worried about being dropped or being shuffled around. But did you

ever feel that feeling where this just isn't going to work out?

It was definitely really scary because our experience at DreamWorks was so good. It was a really good one. They worked really hard. A lot of major labels wouldn't have put in the time that they put it because *Bleed American* took a lot of work and a lot of time to develop and get where it did and I don't think many other labels would have took that time and investment in developing a band like that and then finding out that they were no longer and we were going somewhere else was definitely scary because just getting to know everyone at the label and the people that you work with and a lot of those people aren't there anymore and we're meeting new people and we've never done an album with the same label. Every label has come out, well, *Static Prevails* and *Clarity* were on the same label but *Static* nobody at the label knew us so it's kind of like, that doesn't count.

I remember reading some quote, I think it was from you, talking about when that album came out you were driving around in the mountains saying to each other, "How many copies do you think this album is going to sell? Five hundred thousand? A million?" and you guys were kind of a little underwhelmed. Do you feel that kind of pressure with this album? I mean, obviously you're an established band and people know your name but at the same time are you worried about the one hit wonder category. "The Middle" was used in every summer movie trailer from here to Kingdom Come. Do you feel like you've been painted into a corner?

It could be taken that way but I guess that we have to back it up. **How do you feel about Interscope working the new album? Is that something that you feel confident about?**

Yeah, we've met a lot of people there and a lot of people are really... it's a different machine. It's like definitely no holds barred they are "let's go go go" and it's a huge force behind it working it so it's definitely a whole different experience. Also, at DreamWorks, there was a small number of relatively, of acts that they worked. At Interscope, there's thousands of bands and a lot of them are huge, you know, U2, No Doubt, and Fifty, and Eminem. They have so much time on their calendar and its like what are they going to work on the band that sells a hundred thousand records or the band that sells a hundred million records? Of course, it's a business, they're going to go with what makes the money. It's kind of scary in that respect but I think they're really into the project, that everyone is really excited about it, they really like the record so I think we're going to get our fair shot.

So knowing all that now, do you ever think back and in that downtime between *Clarity* and *Bleed American* where you weren't on Capitol and I'm



sure every indie in the world was knocking on your door, do you ever look back and say, "Well maybe we should've signed with a Big Wheel Recreation or a Vagrant or a Doghouse?"

No, we definitely felt like we did the right thing and what we wanted it to do. We wanted to take it and see how far we could go with it and at the time, an indie could only take you so far. I think times are changing to where indies can definitely do a lot.

Victory Records-Taking Back Sunday, an album can go gold.

Exactly, its amazing and totally cool, and I think that's so great that the

power's being taken away from the major labels, and thank God for the internet.

Well, that's an interesting topic because I don't know if you frequent your message board...

I don't get there as often as I'd like to, but yeah, I check it out. **In recent weeks, the record leaked. Yeah, it got out there.**

People on the message board, of all places, were posting links of where to download the band's own record It's like, "Hey, I'm here!"

It just seems like a no-brainer, if you're going to do something completely illegal, why would you tell the band that you're doing it? But in the

past you've been quoted as telling people "go download our records," especially when they weren't released in Europe.

Yeah, it's definitely helped us immensely.

How do you view it now when you have people downloading the record? Do you feel like the people who download it at this point in time are going to go buy the record?

See, I don't know, you never know, everyone is a different person and I think the internet is a great tool because of what major record labels have been doing in the recent years of putting out crap with the one song albums where

its eight songs of trash and then the one song that's actually worth listening to. People are only going to pay the twenty bucks for one song for so long so now what's happening is people are just going to iTunes and downloading those people's one song and so it's not, it's really changing from albums to songs and I don't know, it's in a huge state of flux right now.

Have you ever downloaded illegally? Um, no. [laughs]

Of course not.

It's definitely a cool thing to explore. It's like a music store that you got to listen to everything and then find something that you like and then you go and buy it. If I have something and I listen to it more than ten times, that means that I like it so I'm going to go buy it. Plus I like the artwork, I like seeing who worked on it.

Do you find that it puts you in a position to put more effort into the artwork, into the extras. There's going to be a deluxe edition of *Futures*...

Yeah, there's going to be a bonus disc, it's each track we put one of the early demo versions. So it's a CD of the demos so you kind of get a vision of what the song came from.

And you guys are doing the vinyl, too, with JLM's label Western Tread, so something like that, that's something that from artwork kind of allows you to be more artistic, you can't download a 12" cover art and print it out on your computer. Does that kind of put it more in perspective of this is art and not just a product?

Yeah, definitely it raises the awareness of this is something that makes the product that much more special and we've always been aware of that.

With the last CD you had the secret site where you could access it and the fans could go download exclusive tracks, is that something that will be repeated with this album too?

Yeah, we're going to do some cool things like that, we're working on specifics.

[Rick orders Pad Thai with Chicken for dinner]

All right let's talk about chicken pad thai for a second.

Yum.

MEGAN: No, with tofu! Yeah.

Now we start talking about the real questions, the stuff that really matters, like thai food.

When we were recording *Futures*, it was in L.A., and down the street was this really good Thai food and Tom loves Tom Yum. So everyday for breakfast, he'd have this huge takeout thing of Tom Yum and it was really spicy.

So, we have Tom Yum, we have Jimmy Eat World, do you feel the need to start your own little thing here? Your own little name?

No, I don't because too many bad things rhyme with Rick, so let's just leave it at that.

I don't know what you're talking about, stick? Wick? I don't know what you're talking about, I think

you're in the gutter there.

Okay. [laughs]

Going back to Tom for a second, there's definitely been a lack of a Tom song since *Clarity* and a lot of die-hard fans want to have a return of him singing. Is that something that's ever going to happen? Does he write songs that are brought to the table that are just scrapped? Or do other members? Do you write songs that are brought?

Not really, I'm not a writer

You just stick to the bass?

Right, I'm just the bass player, I play bass. [laughs] No, Tom writes, he's just not very active right now. I keep telling him he's got to write because he's definitely a talent and has a talent for it so, I don't know. No, he hasn't brought a lot of stuff recently.

Are there any sort of side projects? I know JLM did Go Big Casino, does anyone else have any side projects that they work on?

No.

You pretty much just stick with the band?

Yeah, it's definitely enough to keep me busy.

What do you do, then, in your spare time? Obviously you've been a touring machine for the longest time and you've been recording for a while.

What do you find yourself doing to separate yourself from this life of being the touring rock musician?

Just normal stuff. Just do normal boring things, swim...

Swim?

Hang out, go eat lunch with the family.

Ultimate Frisbee like in the "Lucky Denver Mint" video...

Well yeah, there's always Ultimate Frisbee, you know video games...

That's the funniest music video I've ever seen in my life, I love it.

Oh yeah, you like it?

Oh my god, that's absolutely hilarious. I just watch that and I laugh my ass off.

Cool.

It's so great, I look at that and I'm like "that's what happened," you know? It seems like total mismanagement but it's still hilarious. So what's in your CD player right now? What can't you stop listening to right now?

What am I listening to right now... a lot of '90s stuff like Jawbreaker and Jawbox, kind of listening to that old stuff lately. Built To Spill and you know...

Have you heard Channels yet? J. Robbins' new band?

No, I haven't.

It's him and I can't remember who else. It's coming out on DeSoto as usual, but it's pretty much just a continuation of Jawbox and Burning Airlines.

That's great. Everything he does is great.

Is that someone you'd want to work with in the future?

Yeah, we actually had a chance to work with him on, when we did that DVD it was kind of a messed up situation though as far as the recording aspect because we were filming, we were doing the filming of it and

we were doing some songs with him at Inner Ear and it was just a mess because the film crew, it wasn't a mess but it definitely was not how a recording session happens. No one ever was really comfortable so, but I would really like to do a real deal.

What are some more new bands you're listening to? What are the young guns, you know?

The young guns?

What are some bands that people need to know about, you know, soon. That people are going to be talking about?

I don't know, you tell me, seriously.

You tell me man, I need some A&R tips right now.

Yeah, I honestly don't know, I haven't, yeah. I've been, we've been, caught up in working getting this stuff, I haven't really had the chance.

You pretty much just listen to the same song for twelve hours a day.

Yeah.

You guys have always had diverse touring partners in the past from Weezer to Reubens Accomplish. Who are you looking forward to bringing out the next time you tour, have you thought about that at all?

Yeah, I think someone that is actually going to do some of the shows is Recover. We actually got to do a bit of touring in Europe with them last time and it was a lot of fun and I don't know, I know the Promise Ring isn't a band anymore but we always love to play with them.

Pretty much any band would kill to go on tour with you guys. So many people have went to see you guys and discovered Motion City Soundtrack or the Promise Ring. It's funny because a few years prior, you guys were opening for them. Do you feel the need to "give back" and take more established bands that haven't made the break out on the road?

Yeah, it's just nice to bring friends along. We've gotten a lot of breaks from a lot of other bands so it's always good to pass the buck and help other people out.

Did you ever think that you would've made it this far? Did you ever think, "this is where we're going to be in eight years?"

No, never, well, we definitely hoped and that's what we were working towards so I guess yeah, we imagined that we could be here but never thought it was really going to happen, you know what I mean?

You look around now, and in a few hours a couple thousand people will be out there, is that just a surreal experience?

Definitely. This many people want to come see us? All right. It feels great that so many people are interested in what we do, definitely.

There have been so many bands that you've worked with in the past that have broken up and it's funny nowadays that the big thing is to do the reunion tour. The Pixies are doing this huge reunion tour all year long. It seems like every band is reuniting this year. Braid did their summer reunion tour and you guys opened

for them in Phoenix.

Yeah, that was lots of fun.

How did you guys get involved with that?

We've just known them forever and they were coming to town. We were thinking about *Futures* as all of the previous albums we had a chance to tour and play the songs live and get a reaction before recording them and this time we didn't have the opportunity to do that so we felt like we needed to play it and we just needed to play it for an audience but we didn't want to do our own, do a big, hullabaloo show, so we talked to those guys and they were down so you know, they let us hop on stage.

So you look at all these bands doing the reunion thing because a lot of kids missed them the first time around. What is one band that you'd like to see reunite in this day and age and do a full-fledged tour? Who would you really just die to see one more time on stage?

Yeah, you know, anyone.

Starland Vocal Band, that's what we'll go with.

Yeah, okay, cool. [laughs]

Come on, you've got to say somebody.

I can never, when someone asks me to think of a band that I'm listening to, for some reason. It's like when you go in the record store and you have a list of five things that you need, and then you walk in and you're like, "What's happening to me right now?"

Most people say grocery store, but you say record store.

I know, I'm going to walk away and be like, "Dammit!" [laughs] Okay, I never got to see the Pixies, and now they're playing, we actually did Fuji Rock in Japan and it was this big festival outside and they played the night before us so we got to go and see them.

The thing that's different about that as opposed to other reunion tours they're not doing a cash-in tour, they're writing new material. That's the incredible thing, they're writing new songs ten years after the fact and they're still as good as the old ones and that's just crazy.

Right, exactly. They can do no wrong.

So going way back, what was your first show that you saw that got you into music?

SNFU.

Really? With who else?

I can't remember who else but it was at a club The Silver Dollar, that wasn't the first show I saw, but it was the first punk rock show that I saw.

What was the first show show? Because these are always embarrassing.

Oh my gosh, I think it was like Billy Idol at the State Fair.

Dude, that's punk rock too. You don't fuck with Billy Idol dude, that guy was Generation X.

Billy Idol, yeah.

My first was Weird Al Yancovic. So you've got a step up from me.

Yeah. [laughs]

Although he's badass too. So you see SNFU, when was that? How old were you when you started getting into this stuff?

That was 10th grade, so sixteen, fifteen, and an older kid took me. It's always an older kid.

Yeah, he was like, "You need to come here, you need to check this out." And it was a really cool place, the Silver Dollar Club and like now where it was, the Silver Dollar Club, was the slums of Phoenix like the old warehouse district and stuff and right now it's third base of Bank One Ball Park, where the Diamondbacks play.

There's no going back there.

There's no going back there and I remember after a few years of going to this place and then hearing, "Yeah, some baseball guy bought it and all this stuff out here and he's going to put in bars and stuff" and we're all like, "Oh, fuck." Phoenix is a place there's never been a static establishment, like The Metro has been there for years and it will always be there and it's a great place, you can always get a good show there. Phoenix it's really hard, there's never been something like that that has lasted more than five years or eight years at the most and so it's really weird, for some reason it just doesn't work out. Phoenix is a weird town as far as live shows go, you never know, it's not a presale town, you can say you're going to have a show and everyone just walks up at the end, or sometimes they don't. It's really weird, but I love it there.

You guys base yourselves there, your whole career, you've never felt the need to move to L.A. to make it?
No definitely not, because I think that would kill us.

It kills a lot of people.

First of all, because it's so expensive, I don't know how those people pay to live there, it's so expensive on all ends, you know, all angles. But the weather's really nice, I love it, I love visiting and enjoying the weather.

Except for the whole smog thing.

[laughs] Yeah, we like Phoenix, it's a good place to call our home base, all of our families are still there so it's a good secure relaxing safe haven, I guess, for us.

[To Megan] You had one question you were dying to ask.

MEGAN: Which one?

The pirates.

MEGAN: Oh yeah, pirates or ninjas?
Pirates or ninjas? That is a tough question. I'm going to have to go with ninjas right now.

Now, why.

MEGAN: We need justification.

The only reason I'm saying ninjas right now is because we were recently in Japan and I was really impressed with being where the ninjas were. Because the place we played was up in the mountains at a ski resort and the total Japanese forests and the misty clouds through the tops of the mountains, you can totally see ninjas and samurai just bouncing through the trees and I

was just like, "Oh my God." But yeah, ninjas.

That's important stuff man, people want to know.

MEGAN: That's the only thing I ever care about.

Well then you have to ask the next one, which is robots or ninjas?

Ninjas.

Over robots?

Over robots. But only because the robots will eventually win.

Like in *I, Robot*?

I haven't seen that.

I heard it was horrible.

Yeah?

I heard it was one gigantic product placement the entire movie. I heard in the first five minutes they cut to his shoes and he's wearing Nikes and it set the tone for the whole movie.

No. Wow.

Yeah, it's pretty crazy. So you're going to go with ninjas over robots?

Well only because I root for the underdog.

And just to tie it all together Jimmy Eat World was the ultimate underdog, coming up from the mean streets of Phoenix.

Right, right, the hot streets of Phoenix. [laughs]

Your career has been all the way up to the top, from nothing to this amazing career now. What's one decision you wish you'd never made?

Never would have made?

I know everyone always says no regrets but if there's one thing that you wish you guys had never done as a band, what would it be?

As a band, it's tough because even the bad ones you learn from, like you said, no regrets. There's nothing that we wouldn't do differently, but one thing that really sucked, well there's one decision that I'm glad we did make and it was tough to make them realize that we're not going to do that. Before *Clarity* came out, the label was trying to get things going and like getting us to do things to get people interested and know who we were, so they were like, "Okay you guys, we'll buy a PA and you'll drive in your van and you know the cool 7-11 where the kids hang out after school or whatever, you'll just go set up in the parking lot and be playing at 3:15 as they walk up." **That's some guerilla marketing right there.**

That'd be funny in like a video or something, like a funny thing, but in real life to actually do this for two months... it came to just, "I don't know if that's such a great idea." And the guy was like, "Okay cool, I'll call them up and set it up." And we're like, "I don't know, I don't know, we don't think so," and he's like, "Okay, I've got them on the phone" and we were just like, "Hang up the phone, no, there's no way we're doing that, I don't care what you do to us." [laughs]

You could've broke five years ago man, that could've been your chance.

Our careers would've been over five years ago, too. [laughs]

It's like those split cassettes with Less Than Jake, those go for hundreds of dollars on eBay these days. Are you serious? I have like two cases in my closet.

Mainly because people who are LTJ fans are just crazy collectors. Those go for hundreds.

Are you serious?

Because they're so rare, because they were just promotional.

I have two big logs of them.

I need to get one of those from you. I guess LTJ found a whole bunch of them, too, and called fans and sent them cases of them to get rid of them and now they go for hundreds on eBay. And so do some of your old records. Your split with Emery goes for hundreds.

Hundreds? I need to check this out.

Seriously, I've had people e-mail me because I'm a geek and have my record collection online in case my house burnt down or something.

Oh, for insurance.

And every once in a while, kids will find me on google and find my website and I just get these e-mails and they'll say, "I'll offer you \$100 for this record!" and I'm like, "No, man." I have *Static Prevails* on vinyl and I bought it for four bucks used with the different cover art and every two months some kid finds it and says, "I'll give you \$200 for that." And I just say "fuck no!" That's mine!

I only have one of those.

I don't have the Emery split, that kills me. There's a couple things I don't have still.

I have one of those too. You're blowing my mind. You're freaking me out.

Vinyl is just one of those things that had a resurgence in the mid to late '90s and I used to work at a record store. So I got first dibs on whatever came in and nowadays not many bands do vinyl anymore, especially limited edition 7"s, especially bands of your caliber.

They don't take the time because you're only going to sell a few thousand anyway.

And the overhead is so ridiculous. Even the *Last Christmas* one, that goes for \$50 on eBay and you can still find that everywhere, but it's sold out from the company.

That's funny.

I'll never sell them, man.

Hold strong, but when times get tough...

Once I buy it, it's mine, I don't care how bad it ends up being, I paid for that so it's not leaving my possession.

And really when it comes down to it, what're you going to get for a lot of them? \$5? It's worth way more than that to me.

Yeah, and even if its collectible, even if someone offers me like \$100, I still have a connection to that record. It's weird, because the music is priceless to an extent. Its scary how I can tell you where every single record and CD in my collection came from.

There's a story that goes along with each one.

What is the one record, whether its rare or not, that you would never part

with. If you were marooned on a desert island, what would be your desert island disc?

I hate this question.

Okay well name a couple, your favorite records that all kids should have in their collection, that just transcend genres and scenes and everything.

[Jawbreaker's] *Dear You* is a great record.

Agreed.

I don't know, a lot of stuff, any Fugazi record is good.

Would you put *Clarity* on that list of records that people should own?

No, just because I'm not good at pimping my own stuff. [laughs]

Well man, you're never going to make it in this world, you've got to go to the 7-11. You have to go outside right now and do an acoustic set with just the bass, just you, just go out there and sing the parts you know, kids will dig it man, just watch.

Oh no, it wouldn't be fine.

Put your case out there get some quarters thrown in there; you'll be fine.

All right, I feel good about that now. I'm not as worried anymore.

You don't need them, whatever, it's Rick Eat World from now on.

Okay, cool.

Rick Eat Universe. Fuck it, we're going to go one step further.

All right, cool.

Okay, I think that's all we need, anything else you'd like to say? Free space.

Yeah, keep it real. Looove.

And if anyone wants to check out your band, as if they didn't know already, what's the website they can go to?

Dubya-dubya-dubya dot jimmy eat world dot net dot com. It used to be dot net then we bought it from the kid who was camping on our site. **You see, he's not one of us, man.**

No, he's not, he wanted, oh my god, so much money. We sent a few thugs over and knocked the price down a little bit.

[to Megan] Anything you want to say? You've been so vocal this entire interview.

MEGAN: Well, pirates and ninjas, that's all there was.

Carrots or celery?

Ooh.

Carrots.

Carrots, whatup!

MEGAN: But carrots don't go as well with peanut butter.

Yeah they do, what carrots have you eaten before, or what peanut butter?

MEGAN: Reese's peanut butter is all I eat.

Reese's?

It's all about Jif. Reese's tastes just like the peanut butter you get in the candy.

MEGAN: And that's a problem?

Yeah, that's not real peanut butter.

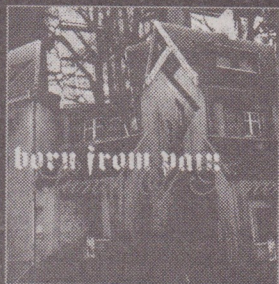
MEGAN: No, it's better!

[to Rick] And this is why you and I are a step above.

MEGAN: This is why I ask pirates or ninjas and you ask real questions.

Exactly.

interview transcribed by Megan Davey

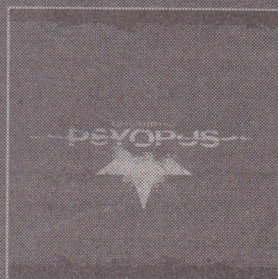
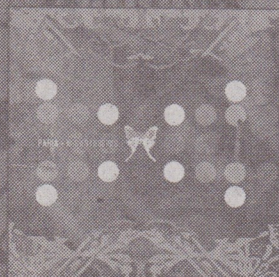


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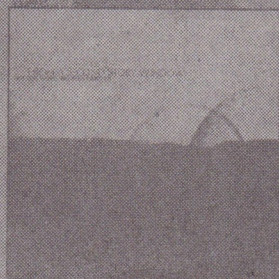


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RAPID FIRE

SHORT
INTERVIEWS
FOR SHORT
ATTENTION
SPANS

PROFILE: 12 STEP REBELS

By Peewee

NAME:

Mad Dog Chad!

POSITION IN THE BAND:

Drummer, Driver, 'Road Dad'

HOMETOWN:

Albuquerque (aka Albucracky), NM

12 STEP REBELS SOUND LIKE:

Not 'Sober Rednecks' like some Promoter in Arizona thought it meant!

OUR LABEL (DEAD BODY WRECKERDS) IS COOL BECAUSE:

It's a family, everyone at our label is very close and they take the best care of us. We're all very close as friends, which is a great feeling to have when dealing with anyone - especially a record label.

FOUR CD'S THAT ARE INFLUENCING ME THE MOST RIGHT NOW:

Tiger Army III: Ghost Tigers Rise, Johnny Cash - Essential Cash or the Murder CD, Morrissey - Your Arsenal & any Bad Religion album.

BEST THING TO DO IN THE VAN IS:

Get up and run around cause it's nice and big or play video games on the X-Box during long drives.

WORST DRIVING INCIDENT INVOLVED:

Shredding both rear passenger side tires doing 75 on I-5 in California or overheating in Death Valley when it was 123 degrees.

ALBUQUERQUE HAS INFLUENCED OUR MUSIC IN THE SENSE THAT:

Our music reflects that kind of desolate & rugged feel you get out here cause there's a whole bunch of nothing...lots of deserted places.

THE KIDS THESE DAYS ARE:

Kids these days are becoming more active, they're getting more of an opinion of what's going on other than just the immediate things around them. It's cool to see kids starting to form the core of what type of person they'll become when they're older much earlier in their lives. Kids these days are smart...and they really enjoy the music.

BEST BAD RELIGION DISC:

I love em all! I have a comp CD I burned of material from



all their albums that I drive to late at night. I do most of the night driving and Bad Religion is my band of choice for staying awake and hauling ass to the next town.

UPCOMING TOURS OR RELEASES:

We'll be on the road till just before Thanksgiving and are planning a tour for the first few weeks of December now before Jakob goes back to school in January. Our new album, 'Go, Go Graveyard Rockin' With...', hit stores in September 21.

WHEN WE'RE NOT ON TOUR WE EARN OUR LIVING BY:

Nate teaches Upright Bass lessons, Jakob goes to college one semester and the rest is devoted to touring or recording and I have a job that I've been at for 5 years but will be leaving before our fall tour to focus on the band full-time.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SHOWS:

Everything! I love every aspect about playing live, it's such a rush and a privilege to be able to play for people. It's definitely something we're appreciative of at every show.

BAND THAT STILL GIVES ME THE CHILLS WHEN I SEE THEM LIVE:

Agnostic Front, Sick Of It All, AFI and Tiger Army all have great energy on stage - I truly enjoy watching them. I was always mesmerized by The Ramones back in NYC (RIP Joey), no matter how many times I saw them it was always a great show! I miss the old New York Hardcore bands like Gorilla Biscuits, Youth of Today and Judge. Their shows always had such high energy.

WEB INFO:

www.12steprebels.com

RUSS RANKIN

ATTENTION LIBERAL AMERICA!! THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS SOLD YOU THE FUCK OUT!!

In the wake of what amounts to an election day beat down by the conservative right in America, many so-called 'liberal' or 'progressive' Americans are left wondering what went wrong. Thousands of Democrats were shocked by the landslide of opposition to their candidate John Kerry; the same John Kerry who was called "liberal" by the president at every opportunity and was painted by the conservative bloggers and publicists as little more than a tree hugger in a political climate which demanded toughness and tenacity.

The question in my mind then becomes just how liberal is John Kerry and, for that matter, just how liberal is the Democratic Party in 2004? Being an unapologetic liberal most of my adult life I became aware of what I felt was a deliberate shift to the right by the Democratic Party under bill Clinton which prompted me to abandon ship and join the Green Party in 2000. It seems my suspicions were confirmed by the Clinton administration's disastrous exploits in foreign policy (namely the invasion of Haiti and the thousands of tons of bombs dropped on the Balkans and a peaceful Iraq) and in its cozy relationship with the corporate elite here at home. It seemed, after all his populist rhetoric while campaigning, that in the end bill Clinton proved to be little more than a moderate Republican. In 2000 Al Gore ran under a seemingly identical platform and, in this most recent election year, John Kerry seems to have followed suit. I found it interesting that Mr. Kerry, the so-called "liberal from Massachusetts," mirrored the President on more issues than he opposed him on; for instance, Kerry said that, if elected, he would send more troops to Iraq. He also shared the president's view that gay couples ought not to be granted the same marriage rights as straight couples. Mr. Kerry voted (along with nearly every democrat in congress) to give the President the authority to invade Iraq with the flimsiest of evidence that it was necessary and he also voted in favor of the USA patriot act. Is this really the record of a 'liberal' senator from the northeast?

The next four years represent a necessary period of reflection for liberal, progressive Americans. If the Democrats can no longer be trusted to provide the voice of the left at the highest levels of the federal government than who can? Ralph Nader is aging rapidly and seems to be on his way out of politics. The Libertarians, arguably the third biggest party in the country, continue to cling to an anachronistic dogma of private property and personal isolationism. So who does the pro-choice, anti-war, anti-capital punishment, pro-health care American turn? It just might be the Green Party. This is the party that opposed the invasion of Iraq, the invasion of Afghanistan, the bombing of Kosovo and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. This is the party that wants to finally bring America up to speed with the rest of the free world by mandating a single-payer, national health care policy which would finally make universal health care a right in America instead of a privilege. The Democrats oppose this plan while George W. Bush, in the second "debate," even said "other countries have tried socialized health care; it doesn't work." What? Who did he ask? All his rich friends who operate HMO's? I have met dozens of Australians, Canadians, Swedes and Britons who think the idea of socialized health care is working just fine so why couldn't it work here in what is supposed to be the richest country in the world? Why can we spend trillions on bombs and illegal wars and yet stubbornly refuse to grant even the most basic amenities of human life to the 99% of us who aren't billionaires? The Green Party would make it happen.

Every Democrat in America faces a critical time over the next four years and this reflection ought to start with the realization that their beloved Democratic Party has shifted so far to the center that it is actually on the right these days and that the elected Democrats in Congress can no longer be counted on to oppose the destructive conservatism of the Republican Party and it's increasingly fundamentalist stranglehold on the American consciousness. It's time for a new liberal voice to be given a chance to be heard outside of the limited confines of the internet or late

night C-Span broadcasts. For more info go to www.gp.org

GO NORTH YOUNG MAN

I found this article in Canada's Globe & Mail.

By Marina Jimenez

Some Americans are willing to do anything to avoid another four years of George W. Bush — even move to Canada.

Joe Auerbach is so disappointed with Mr. Bush's election victory that he is planning to give up a job as a systems analyst and leave his comfortable life in Columbus, Ohio, to move to a country with "a better government and more reasonable people."

"Today, once the Bush victory was clear, my e-mail was burning up with people vowing to leave the U.S. for Canada," said Mr. Auerbach, 27.

"I don't want to be living in the U.S. when China decides we are a threat and when George Bush starts drafting computer engineers into the army. I'm morally opposed to the Bush administration."

He and several other disenchanted Americans are contacting immigration lawyers north of the border to see whether they qualify to immigrate to Canada. It is too soon to say whether this is political hot air or the start of a new trend in immigration.

But among some middle-class, liberal Americans, there is a growing sense of political disengagement as they realize the majority of their fellow citizens support the conservative agenda of Mr. Bush, who received 51 per cent of the popular vote, winning more votes than any other president in U.S. history.

"Mr. Auerbach is one of many middle-class Americans who have a philosophical difference with the direction the U.S. is taking," said Sergio Karas, a Toronto immigration lawyer. "I have received several inquiries from people like him who want to move here."

Jacqueline Bart, a Toronto immigration lawyer, said she recently attended a conference in New York and more than a dozen U.S. lawyers asked her about sending their children to study in Canada. "There is a sense of hesitation about the direction Bush is taking the country in," she said.

Clyde Williamson, a libertarian from Ohio, feels the Bush administration is too conservative on social-justice issues such as gay rights, abortion and the medicinal use of marijuana. He is also opposed to the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

"I don't think the U.S. is going to turn into Nazi Germany or anything. But it is going to become a much more conservative country," said the 29-year-old computer-security engineer.

Others feel Mr. Bush's unilateralist foreign policy is more troubling even than his social conservatism. A former U.S. diplomat who has already applied for permanent-resident status said yesterday that Mr. Bush's election victory has accelerated his determination to relocate permanently to Vancouver.

"I'm watching this administration preside over the virtual destruction of relations with the Muslim world — and, I fear, end up strengthening the forces of terrorism as a result," he said.

"The values of Canada are what I thought the values of the U.S. used to be: personal freedoms, a sense of need for a global community and consensus. The U.S. is losing its way."

A Toronto lawyer representing three U.S. soldiers who have fled to Canada to avoid fighting in Iraq said Mr. Bush's re-election means more U.S. deserters are likely to seek refugee status north of the border.

Jeffrey House, a Vietnam-era draft-dodger who is steering

RUSS RANKIN

the refugee claims of the three young men, says he has received about 80 e-mails from other U.S. soldiers stationed around the world, inquiring about escaping to Canada to avoid serving in Iraq. At least five U.S. soldiers are believed to have fled to Canada.

Maria Iadonardi, spokeswoman for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, said it is too soon to say whether there has been a spike in the number of Americans being granted permanent residency, noting the number has fluctuated in recent years from a low of 4,437 in 1998 to a high of 5,604 in 2001.

So far this year, 5,353 Americans have become permanent residents.

AMERICA IS WATCHING MSNBC

Recently I became so disturbed by the complete lack of coverage of all but the two wealthiest presidential candidates that I decided to actually DO something about it.

Generally each morning I will read the Guardian (U.K.) and the Globe & Mail (Canada) for some news and then watch MSNBC for comedic effect. The network seemed to be forever encouraging viewers to write them emails expressing their 'opinions' on the presidential race and the upcoming election in general so I decided to chime in with my two cents. I have sent this letter a total of six times to every email address I could find for MSNBC. As of yet I have received no reply. Here is my letter:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am wondering how, in a so-called democracy and on a network that presents it's self as a "news" forum, you can justify the absence of the other national parties and their presidential candidates from your various programs. In a time when the upcoming election is effectively dominating most of the major network news channels I find the complete, systemic, across the board denial of even the existence of these other democratic options a disgrace as an American.

Your on-air personalities keep up the spin on a daily basis constantly referring to "the two" parties or "both" candidates; my belief is that this sort of irresponsible 'reporting' precludes a bias against any party or candidate who hasn't effectively bought their way into the 'members only' club our electoral system has become. The fact remains that there are several parties involved in this race and their will be more than "the two" candidates on our ballots on November 2nd. How are Americans expected to make an educated decision when you have done your level best to tell us absolutely nothing about all but the wealthiest, most corporate-friendly candidates?

Due to the collusive, bi-partisan C.P.D.'s (Committee on Presidential Debates) refusal to allow any other candidates to participate in the three prime time network debates, the other presidential hopefuls have staged several debates on their own at various colleges around the country. Again, your network

has completely ignored these stirring and informative forums which, in my view, were far more entertaining than the inane discourse the networks showed between Senator Kerry and the President. The absence of these other candidates from the network debates also meant that the scope of the issues discussed was much smaller as the Democrats and Republicans seem to agree on more than they disagree on these days. In this limited, controlled forum both Kerry and Bush could give careful, vague answers and, in effect, agree on most things yet use language which kept up the appearance of a difference of opinion.

I recently watched a commercial for your news network. I believe it went something like this; "When America faces a critical choice America is watching MSNBC." Also there was this one: "When every vote counts, America is watching MSNBC." Maybe you ought to air a new, more truthful ad which could say something like, "When they only want to be shown a splinter of the vast electoral landscape, America watches MSNBC." Or maybe this one: "When they only want to see or hear about the two wealthiest candidates for president, America watches MSNBC."

Shame on you and shame on us for allowing our telecommunications systems in this country, built at public expense, to be hijacked and used to batter us daily with this fallacious doctrine and selective reporting of the "news" at a time in our history when real news and complete reporting are at a premium.

Yours,

Russ Rankin, Citizen

DEAR NHL PLAYERS - GET BACK TO WORK!!

Ok so I'll admit it. I am fucking dying here without a National Hockey League season! I know, I know... in the big scheme of world events the current labor impasse between the NHL player's union and the owners is fairly petty but, in my pathetic little life it is looming pretty large. Today I actually set up my Tivo to record women's college hockey (not that that's a bad thing but I mean come on...).

For a guy who detests every other organized sport the current situation has created a massive vacuum in the life of a guy who was fairly activity-challenged to begin with. No games to record on a daily basis. No trades. No news. No San Jose Sharks season tickets. No putting my life on hold for six months so I can live and die by the successes and failures of the New Jersey Devils. No hockey night in Canada on Saturday nights! Hell, I even miss Don Cherry and I thought I would NEVER say that!

So come on NHL players... \$1.3 million dollars U.S. isn't that bad is it? Just come back to work and I promise we'll never 'boo' you for a bad pass again! Just lace them up and I swear I'll make a donation to the pension fund... anything you guys want - just get back on the ice! We can still salvage over half a season so what do you say? Can you suck it up and take that measly \$1.3 million for the greater good? Please? ☹

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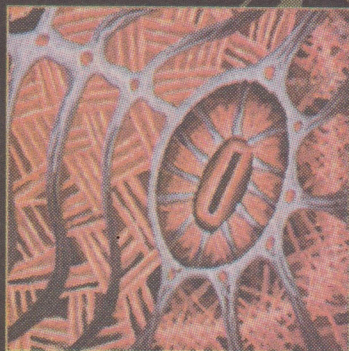


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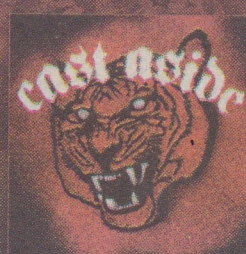
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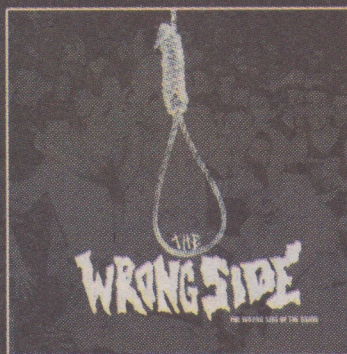
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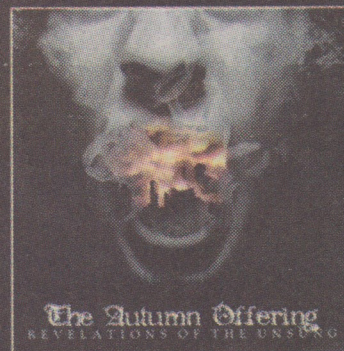


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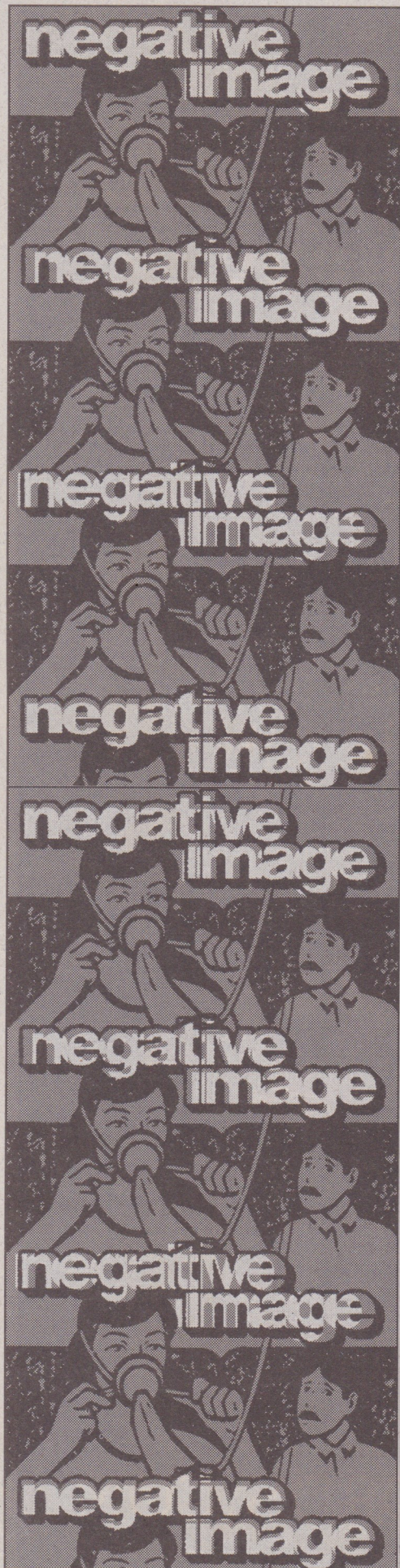
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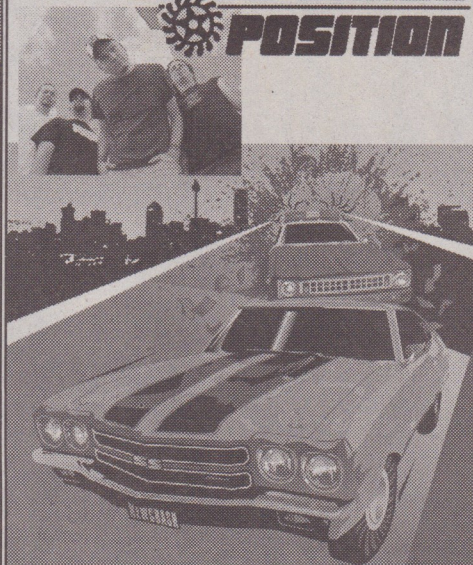
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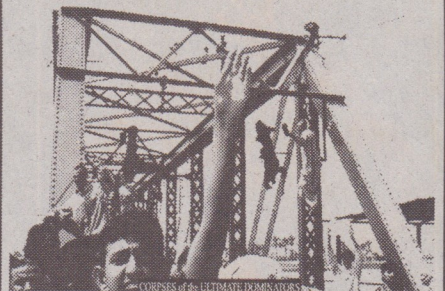
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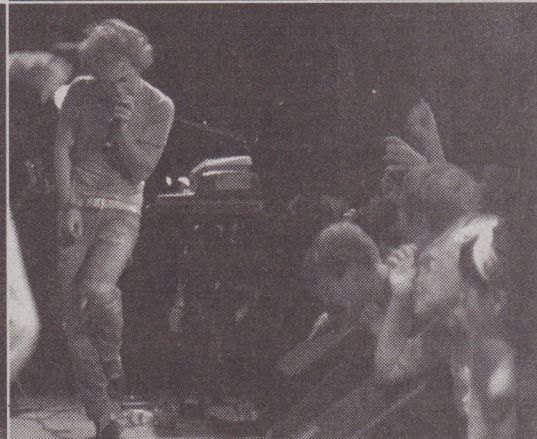
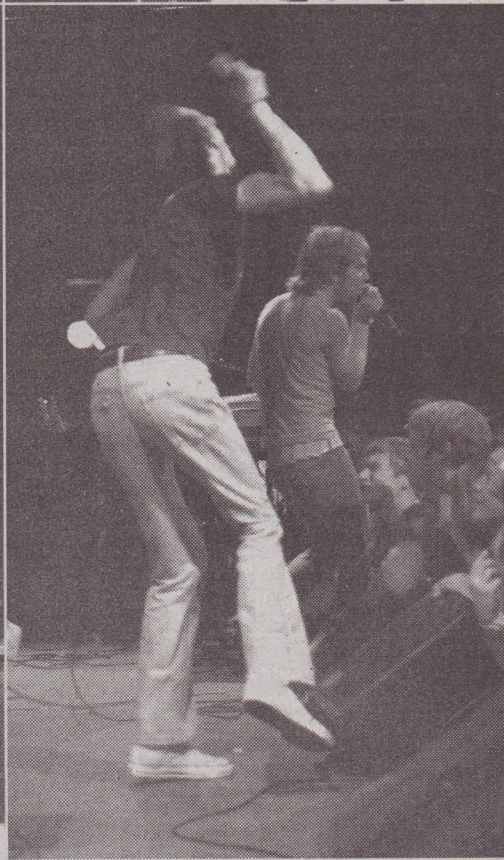
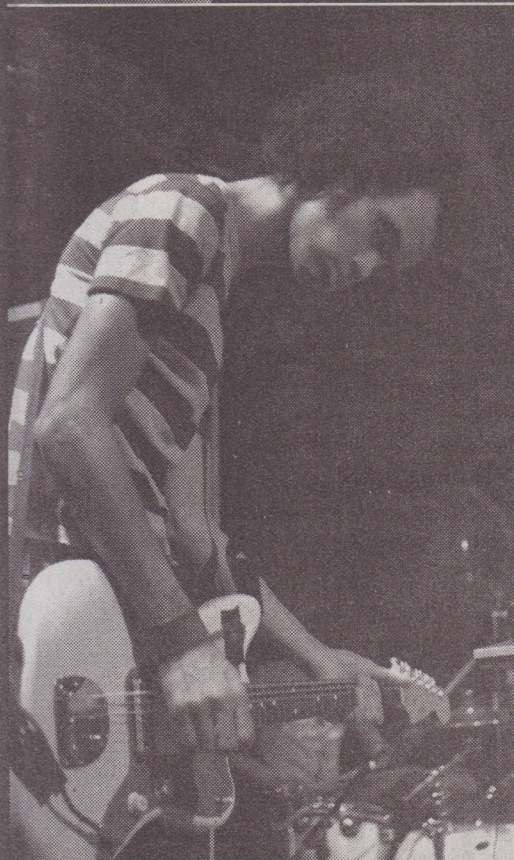
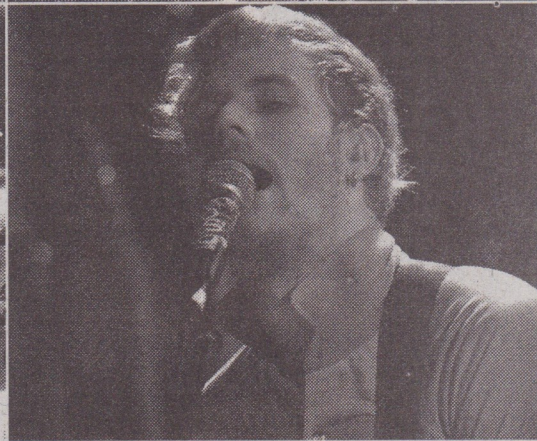
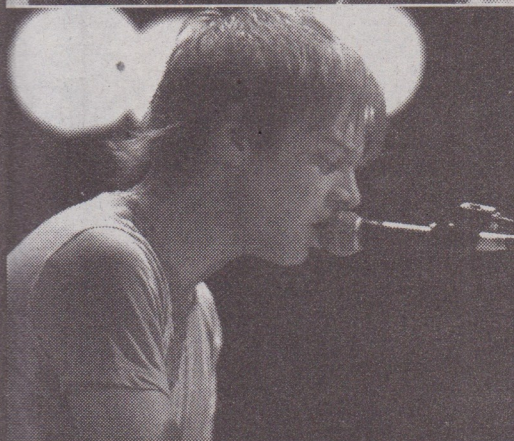
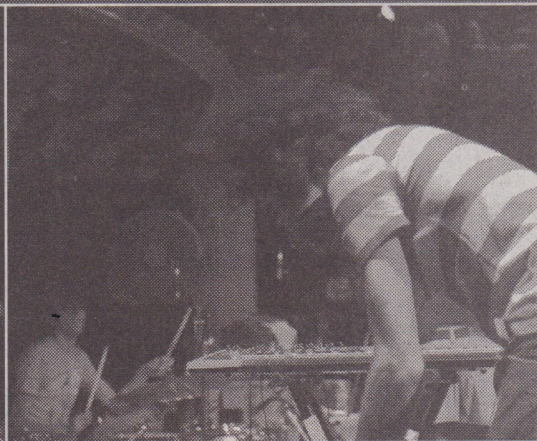
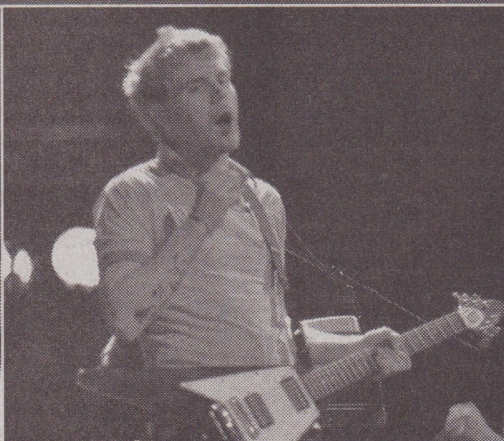
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the blood brothers

LIVE AT THE GREAT AMERICAN MUSIC HALL, SAN FRANCISCO / PHOTOS BY JOHN JOH



CONVERGE



By Kirby Unrest

I recently had the distinct pleasure of interviewing one of the most important bands of the last 10 years...the unstoppable monolith that is Converge. Jacob Bannon, vocalist/lyricist/graphic artist/Deathwish Records co-head honcho and I sat down to talk about their new record and label, DVD's/videos, set lists, running a label, split records, the greyhound dog racing industry, and the battle of the better vegan chefs.

You've had a lot of line up changes over the years. Has that hindered the writing process at all and how is it playing as a four piece now?

In the contrary we have had very few lineup changes, especially for as long as we have been an active band. Our most recent change

was asking Aaron to step down as second guitarist in 2001. It was a necessity for a variety of reasons, however it was not a mean spirited thing in any way. We were simply growing away from one another. He was moving in his direction, and we were moving in ours. It was simply time. This did not effect writing in a

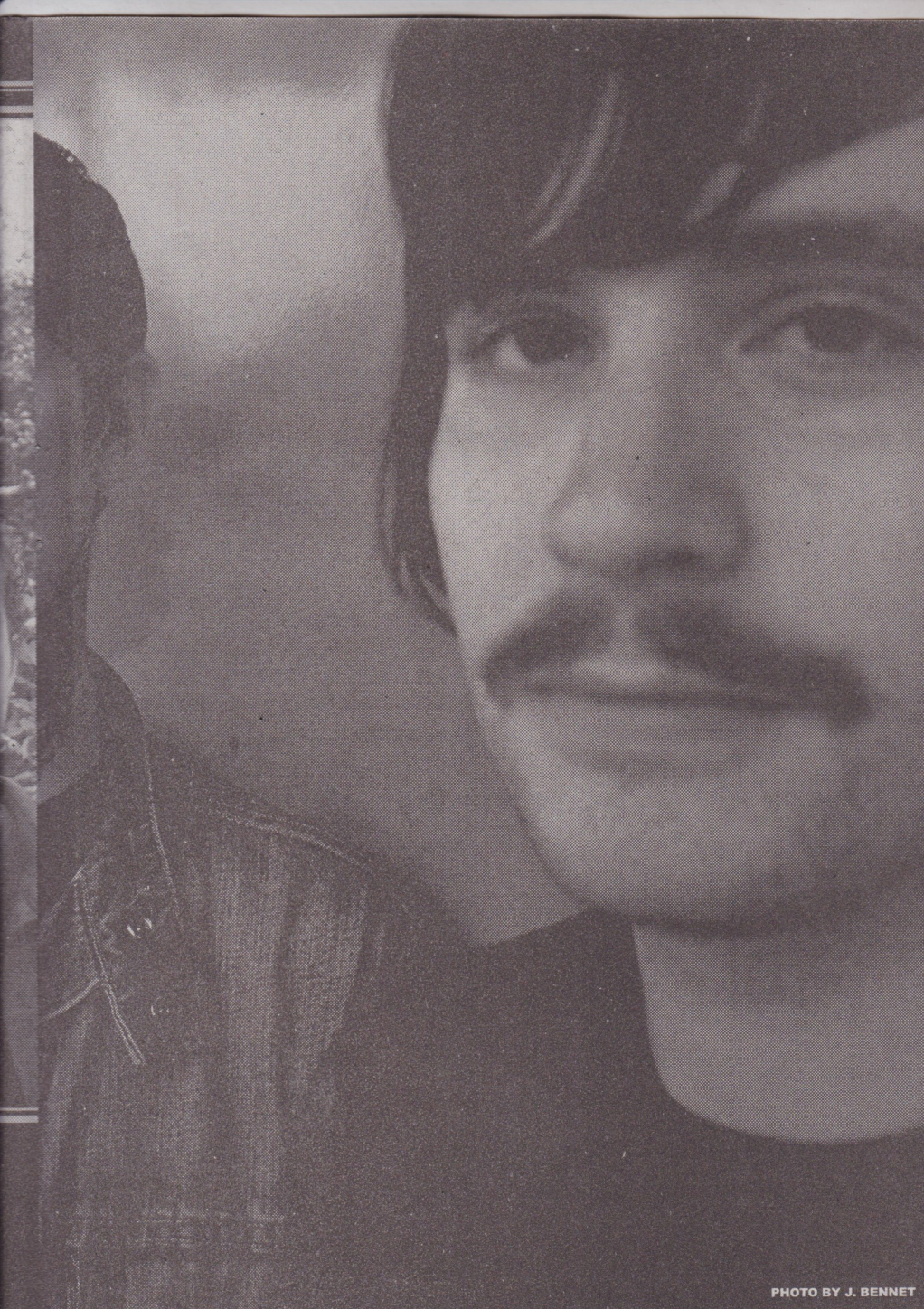


PHOTO BY J. BENNET

negative way at all. Aaron, though an active member, wasn't a member who wrote for the band on a regular basis. Kurt brought most ideas to the table at that time, and we collectively shaped them as a band from there. 3 years later I can safely say that not only are we comfortable as a four piece, we wouldn't have it any other way. The chemistry between the four of us works very well for us.

How do you compose a set list every night? I'm sure there are many songs kids want to hear. Is there a specific way you balance it out, and has being a foursome changed your ability to play any particular tunes?
Since a majority of our songs have been writ-

ten by a single guitar player in mind, the lineup change of 3 years ago didn't really effect what songs we could and could not play live. It's difficult to play everything that every person wants to hear in a live setting, but we do our best to cover a wide variety of releases. On this tour for example, we played 14-16 songs a night from varying releases.

You guys just put out a new record, "You Fail Me." How do you feel it compares to previous work, and were the results what you had originally intended?

We don't compare releases. We are all about forward movement. Writing music and creat-

ing art that moves us and challenges us. We are certainly collectively happy with what we have created with "You Fail Me". It's a very raw album. Most loud music recordings are devoid of the character that defines a band. We obviously didn't want that. Our goal was to record an album that was as raw and abrasive as our live performance. Although we attempted that with "Jane Doe" there are elements on that album that felt artificial to us. This recording was a much more successful attempt at capturing who we are.

This is your first record on Epitaph. What happened with EVR (Equal Vision Records) and what made you decide on a label better known for their history in the punk rock/ska scene, rather than the metal/hardcore one?

After "Jane Doe" was released our obligations to Equal Vision entered a grey area. We felt that our contractual obligations were fulfilled at that point. After some talking amongst ourselves we came to the collective conclusion a new label home was needed. Epitaph was actually our first choice for that home. Soon after, we met some people over at Epitaph who were very supportive of our efforts, and that was that. We are very happy with that decision. In the past 5 years, Epitaph have really grown as a label and started working with such an interesting group of artists. We are now label mates with Sage Francis, The Locust, Death By Stereo, Tom Waits, Nick Cave, etc. It's a welcoming and diverse environment for us.

Converge has grown increasingly popular over the years, but it could be said that "Jane Doe" really helped you break on through. Did you expect the huge reaction that came with it?

Not at all. I recall all of us feeling that it was our most abrasive recording to date at that time. And in many ways it was the most non-accessible release for us as a band. It is certainly flattering for us that many hold that album close to their hearts. It's a very powerful album for us.

Over the years, you've toured with extremely diverse bands, and yet, everyone seems to enjoy you, even though you don't have the most accessible sound. Do you think it's just incredibly fun live show or something more?
I feel people are searching for music and art with substance and heart. Both the mainstream and independent music communities are lacking in that. Our approach is the antithesis to that world of emptiness and our supporters are also searching for something more. That ideology crosses genres and has the potential to unify. That is a rare and beautiful thing.

Converge fans are definitely a dedicated group. Do you have a lot of interaction with

them?

Though I am a very private person I do my best to spend time with the people who let our music and art into their lives.

Along the same lines, I've seen more than a few Converge inspired tattoos. Not on par with the amount of Misfits or Minor Threat ink out there, but quite a bit. When you started this band did you ever think kids would be getting your lyrics and artwork permanently etched into their skin?

I never really thought about any of those sort of things. I just wanted to be a part of a community that I found to be a very inviting thing. I was just inspired by so many involved. It's such a flattering thing though to see so many touched by what we do.

Did you enjoy putting the DVD together, rewatching all the moments? Was it hard to leave stuff out?

There was so much material. We had stacks and stacks of stuff that we had sent our pal Zach who put it together boxes of tapes. We were just trying to find something that would reflect our history, as well as be interesting. It took a long time to collect all the footage, and editing it all up to create a timeline that was both interesting to us and educational in some ways as well for other people.

I know you just did a video for "Eagles Become Vultures." Are you hoping to do more videos from "You Fail Me?"

Our pal Zach who's done videos for us before, has just done so much great work. It's been a really great experience working with him, and so yeah, it's definitely a possibility. Videos are kind of hard though because you have to take your musical vision and give it to someone else, having that person give their version of your work. We've been fortunate enough to have kept it within our family of friends.

Kurt has been recording bands for some time now, including your own. Has his schedule ever hindered your time practicing and/or in the studio or are you all too equally business to notice?

We all certainly have our own responsibilities and his recording studio is one of those things. It's his day job and it takes a lot of his time. Yet, when we do this, we all compromise. I've had art and design projects that I've been committed to and haven't been able to share my time, but we all do our best to keep the band in focus. It's hard but we make it work.

When are you planning on releasing the "new and improved versions" of "Forever Comes Crashing" and "Petitioning The Empty Sky?"

We resolved a lot of our issues with Equal

PHOTOS BY RYAN RUSSELL



Vision and they've resolved a lot of their issues with us so the project is back on schedule. We finished the audio portion of it and now we are working on the enhanced video and design portions. I was hoping to have it done before we left for this tour, but there was too many other things going on. We are shooting for an early 2005 release. Kurt finished the audio, and from what I've heard, I'm pretty pleased with it.

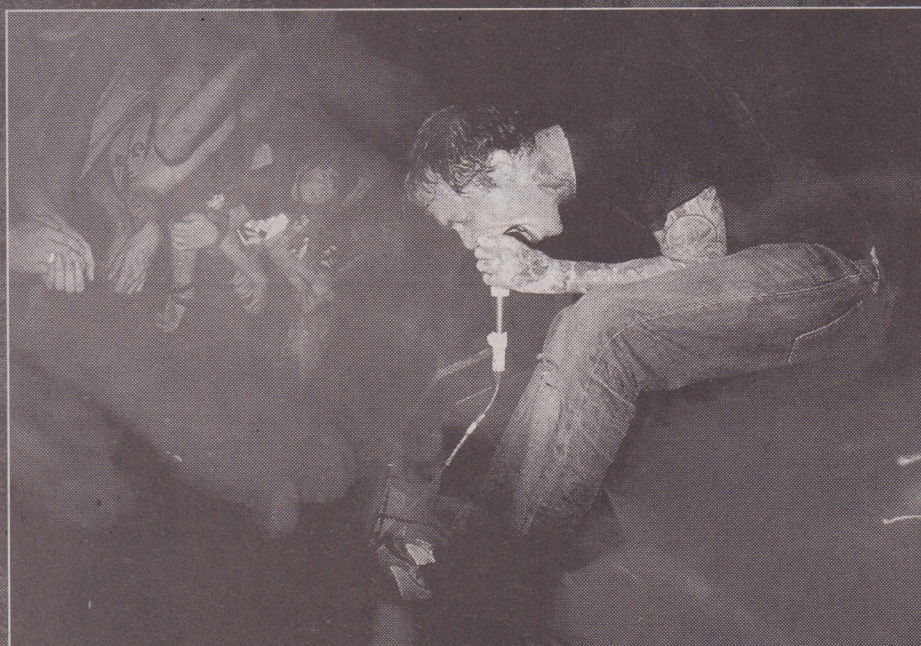
Will you ever do another split record?

Possibly. We haven't really thought about it. I suppose we are sorting of doing one now though. We are doing a collaborative record with Cave In under the name Virgin. It's both bands playing as one band, with each piece being satellite ones, i.e. featuring members

XYZ on this song, and others have ABC. It's pretty interesting. We are about half way into it now, with around five tracks recorded. When we get home, we are planning on recording the rest. It's interesting and definitely a lot of fun. It's a celebration of our friendship. We don't have a release date or anything right now, but we hope to have it out soon.

How is everything going with Deathwish? Why did you start a label? Any new acts/releases kids should know about?

We're getting ready for 2005. We just everything wrapped up for 2004, including the vinyl for "You Fail Me" and a release from Nine, a great Swedish band who toured with in Europe. They are on Burning Heart in Europe, but did the American release with us. Just a



great band, amazing record. For 2005, we got the Blacklisted/First Blood split coming out, which hopefully will be ready around Christmas. We got Draw Blood. New Modern Life Is War is coming out, we are really excited about that. I've heard the demos and they are incredible. New Embrace Today, we are really excited about that. Hopefully some more stuff from 100 Demons. New Switchblade record. New Holy Ghost record, which features Human Furnace from Ringworm. We also will be working with Killing The Dream, another fantastic band.

Running a label, what are your thoughts on mp3s and illegal file sharing?

We do a thing called the "Near Death Experience" which is basically a high quality,

streaming audio player that plays three or four songs from an actual album, so you can check it out, sample it. We include information, so you can find out a little bit more about the band, when it's being released, things like that, so it's just an mp3. It's a constant struggle though. This community is really small, and you can take and take and take all the time but eventually you have to give back or this community isn't going to be around. If you are going to steal, go after the major labels. Don't pick on the little guy. We all work our asses off, this our love. We do this because we really love it and want to give back. We squeeze by most of the time, like most of the midsize punk and hardcore labels.

Are you still doing the "Dear Lover" project?

Yeah, I've recorded about three and half-hours worth of material and right now I'm just trying to mix and edit it down. I'm shooting for sometime in 2005 to have it finished up and out. We are going to have a few months off, so I'm optimistic.

Your graphic design work is amazing. What upcoming albums will it featured on?

I just worked on the new No Warning. That project had a lot of limitations being that it was a major label endeavor, but I was fairly happy in the end. Simple but effective artwork, which is what they wanted. I'm trying to cut back on a lot of design projects, basically because I don't have the time. I'm only doing two more for the year, and that's for the new As I Lay Dying album and the new Comeback Kid album.

I read the interview on Peta2 in which you discussed your vegetarian beliefs. I was interested in the comments you made about the greyhound dog racing industry, which I too feel is horrible. Have you been involved in any volunteer efforts to work at outlawing this barbaric practice?

I did some volunteer work when I was living in Rhode Island for about a year and a half. Just taking dogs out, volunteering for a shelter, helping out with adoptions, trying to find homes for them. I actually ended up taking two home with me and they are my best friends. I love them. They are more people than they are dogs.

On the "New England Hardcore and Metalfest DVD 2003," there is an interview portion with you and Nate, where you guys beat the hell out of each other with belts. Any new road warrior wounds you'd like to discuss?

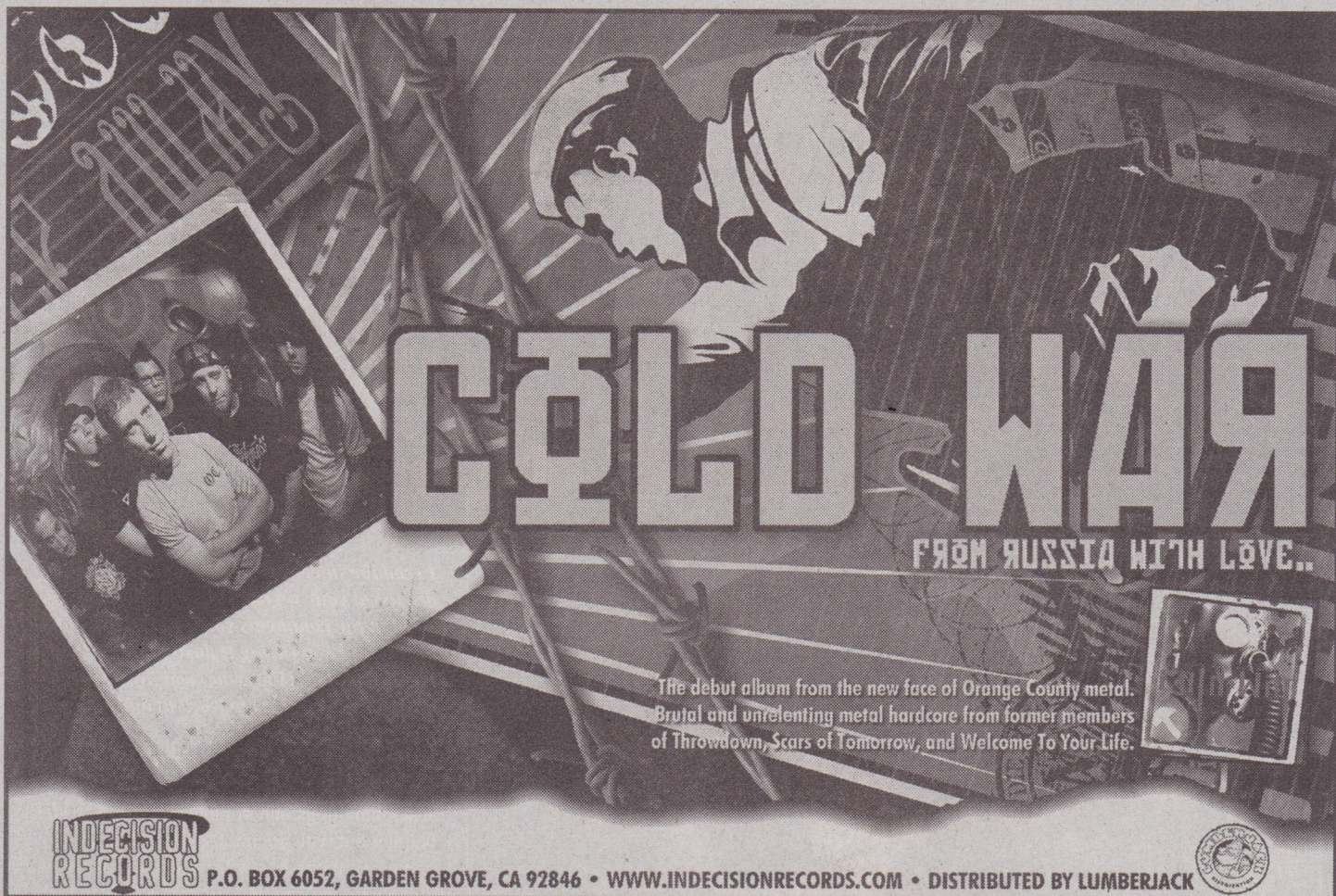
(laughs) I've been trying to be good on this tour and not hurt myself too much. Lately it's been Thomas and Ben. Thomas is our merch guy and all around handler of things. Those two definitely get into it. Though we all do it sometimes, out of sheer boredom. I mean it's just pain; you get over it. We're extreme people. We do extreme things.

Got to kill time somehow...

Yeah. Well I mean it's so rewarding to be on tour, but it's also boring on a 20-hour drive. You can't sleep, you can't stay awake, you can't eat; it drives you insane.

There seems to be a consistent debate over who is the better vegan chef: Kurt or King Ron Perry. Do you think there should be a cook off at Hellfest or something like that?

Kurt loves food, so if I am going to say anything that involves Kurt and food, Kurt is going to win. ♪



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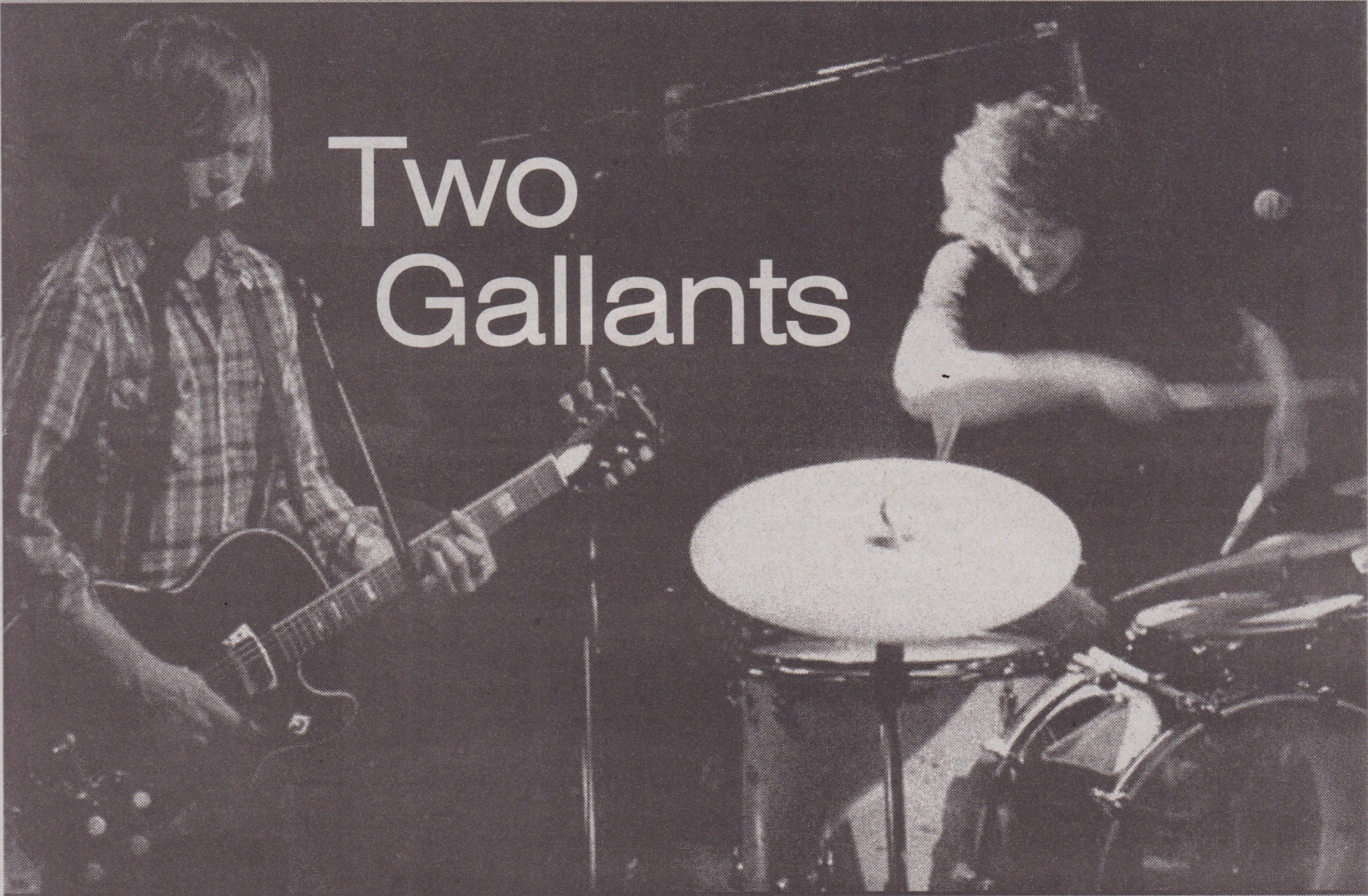
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Two Gallants

Two Gallants. Changing the unceasing murmur.

By West Hays / Photograph By Misha Vladimirovsky

It smells a little bit like the Chinese joint next door and a lot like the Pabst Blue Ribbon sticking to the floor when I step into the Tradewinds bar in Cotati, California. I'm two hours early for a Two Gallants show. As families clad in shorts and sunglasses stroll by the front window, the people inside the bar try hard to kill their time. Two old men drinking alone speak separately to the bartender, who knows them both by name. With every chirp and whistle of the Adams Family pinball machine a woman sporting four lips' worth of hot pink Revlon gives it a solid push from her seasoned hips. At the same time her excess rolls of flesh try to push their own way out of her matching pink spandex one-piece. "Bullshit no bonus!" she yells at poor Uncle Fester before thrusting another quarter into the slot. The bartender grabs another PBR from the metal tin leaking over the silver booze coupons the old men leave as tips, and it occurs to me that this is what God intended when He invented the dive.

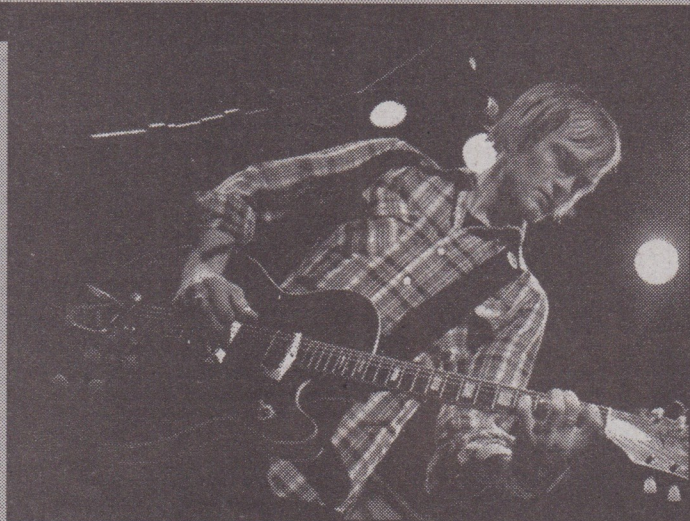
The longer I wait the more I am bombarded by the differences between the Two Gallants' gig tonight and the show I saw last week, when they headlined before hundreds of people at the Independent in San Francisco. But streetlights soon turn on,

the summer-dressed families return to their homes and my drinking geriatrics meander out after downing their last sunset special. Each one wears an expression that, in the meagerly-lit bar, almost looks like a smile. By the time Two Gallants sets up in the lit-

tle space at the foot of a staircase where one might incorrectly presume to find a stage, the old crowd is replaced at least five-to-one by the enthusiastic vespertine members of the local scene, comprised mostly of students from nearby Sonoma State College.

Galvanized by the insurgence of youth, I return the energy and battle the crowd for a better view. I manage to wriggle through a group of small girls, but hit a human wall topped with an afro as soon as the band starts to play. The deep resonance of thick gauge guitar strings crashes through the audience. Next come the drums, which sound like they're getting the shit kicked out of them by two of the softest hands on earth. My view completely blocked, it's easy to hear what would be obvious to see: this is not a fair fight.

The Gallants play Moses with their spectators, and by the start of the second song the crowd divides in two: one half avid listeners with intently nodding heads, one half mosh pit. The song, *Fail Hard to Regain*, is a loud but grace-



ful epic with a harmonica accompaniment nudging its way through drums and guitar. By the song's hook – an up-and-down refrain that screams the whole night through – the head-nodders have joined the pit.

The following song is *My Madonna*, a melancholy number about loss and survival (a motif in the Gallants' collective score). It swings the audience back to the other side of the spectrum, where even the most flailing of moshers joins in the unison of nodding heads. The audience stands immersed, as the words dance across the players' staves. The lyrics – which don't get lost, rather run slightly adrift in the translation to black and white by way of the forward slash – put the same interrogatory expression upon every on-looking face: who told this band what I said in my sleep last night?

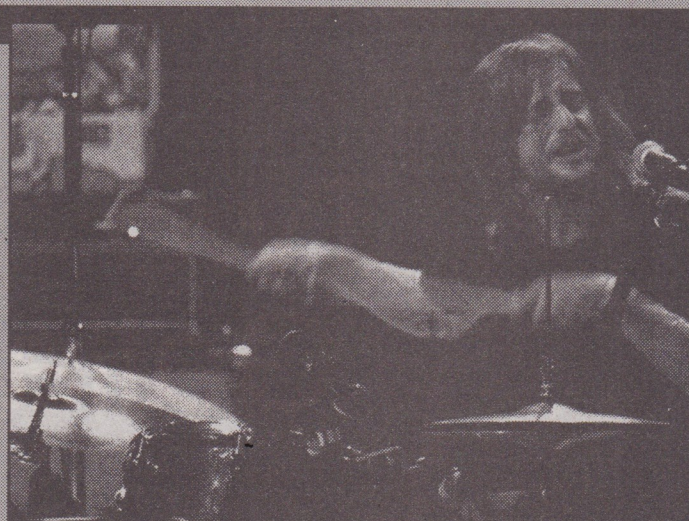
Throughout the night, the band's original combination of old time blues, gritty punk rock and country hardball takes the listeners on an aural rollercoaster. At each song's end they find themselves slightly overwhelmed, still begging for more.

I, however, have been on this ride before. The crowd hesitates during a pause between songs, trying to anticipate weather to mosh or nod, and I spot an empty seat beside the action. Threading the crowd, I grab the chair before its rightful owner has completed his computations and, using it as my footstool,

get my first look at the band. The spectacle shocks me no matter how many times I've seen it: all of those sounds burning up the would-be stage, all that noise filling the overflowed room, is somehow spilling from a single pair of bodies; exactly Two Gallants.

Two Gallants is comprised of one part Adam Stephens (vocals, guitar, harmonica), one part Tyson Vogel (drums) and one part you can't quite put your finger on, though said finger remains unaware as it taps to the pulse the music. It can be speculated that the duo's chemistry is born from their long, shared history.

Vogel and Stephens met in their native San Francisco, somewhere between finger painting and naptime in the early days of grade school. "We probably first played together back in sixth grade, the age of 'In Utero,'" recalled Stephens in an e-mail interview. "We both were playing guitar, dirty chords, and our friend Jeff Blaire played the drums. I don't really remember how bad it was. All I know is it got a lot better after I left town. I lived on the East coast for a while and Tyson and Jeff kept playing. Perhaps the improvement was due to the addition of a bassist instead of two guitars playing the exact same chords on top of each other." (Blaire, though not in the band any longer, remains immersed in music and is working with a mechanical engineering team in



Antarctica).

Reviving a memory of an eighth grade talent show with the melodramatic gusto of a tortured fourteen year old, Stephens proclaims, "I remember feeling like an under-appreciated prophet and weeping in the locker room after the show, while thinking about how I knew I would end up there. I'm pretty sure there was a girl was involved, or at least the idea of one."

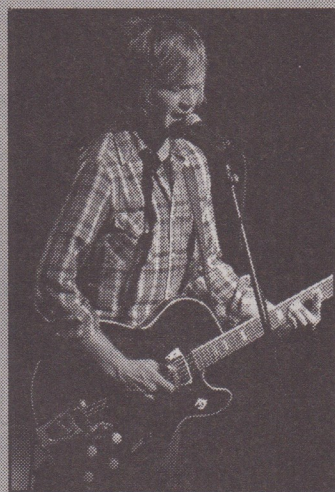
Picking up where Adam's gusto leaves off, and drumming-up a little anguish of his own, Vogel adds, "Losing ourselves in the poisons and intoxicants of the teen age, high school legioned our young faces, and we spread to other individual endeavors, all the while still in distant step with one another. Adam still played music and the guitar, in the range of my ear and admiration, as I slowly led myself astray, and away from the throes of music. Though we still saw one another during this time and collaborated at the odd piano during debauchorous nights of youthful meetings, four hands improvising a minor and tempestuous sonata. Time passed travels and trials, we found ourselves in my kitchen drinking late into the night as the age of twenty-one stared us down, Adam emoting song, and I sitting with fisted sticks."

You would be hard-pressed to find a review of Two Gallants that didn't make some mention of the startling-

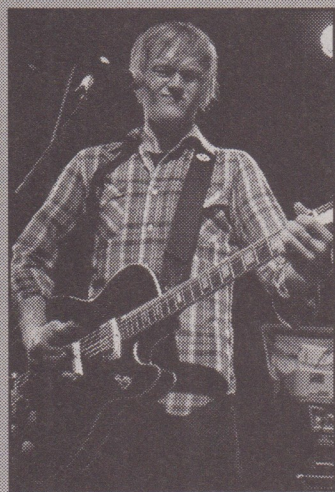
ly few years behind such mature musical output. Such specific generalizations force this reviewer to wonder why nary a word is printed about the antiquated musical upchuck so often splattered through the airwaves by music's middle-aged. And must every decent metal band lend a voice to the white kids of suburbia, while well-versed hip-hop always speaks for the inner-city black youth (except those really juicy stories about the white guy who pulls it off)? Or, just sometimes, can the artists speak for themselves?

Even better, let the fans speak for them. "[Two Gallants] have a refreshing willingness to completely rock out, go crazy, play any venue and put everything they've got into it. There's a dedication to the audience," Quips Greg McGarry, who claims to have been to over eighty-five of the band's shows (a statistic as remarkable as it is unverifiable). "They whip the crowd into a frenzy . . . there's a partnership." Two Gallants is able to transcend their own years, complexion and volume by composing music not as two young white men, but two humans playing for an audience of the same. Accordingly, they sing about a tortured humanity that is as feeble and destructive as it is tender and brilliant.

Today, some nine years after the Town School talent show, while the crowd has grown larger and the tear-filled locker rooms fewer



between, not all is beer and skittles for Two Gallants. In the past fifteen months they have logged upwards of 80,000 miles touring in their 1991 Suburban. On their most recent of four US tours in half as many years, the pair sped from San Francisco to New York City's lower East Side in just six days, playing a show every night. On the seventh day the Gallants stored their Suburban along the edge of the long-term parking lot at JFK and boarded a plane. They arrived in San Francisco just in time for soundcheck before playing to a capacity crowd at Slim's, one of the city's top music venues. The following day




the band returned to JFK and paid the \$15 parking fee – \$5 more than the band had expected after miscalculating the time difference – then backtracked ten miles west to play a small house party in Brooklyn. "It really was ridiculous," remarks Jonathan Levinson, who joined the Gallants on tour. "We'd be wherever we were and they'd play a show and we'd party all night. Since we never had a place to stay we'd just drive the rest of the night drinking Rockstars and Red Bulls." (The band has since been warned of the catastrophic dangers in marrying that particular combination with a mouthful of Pop Rocks).

Covering so much ground takes its toll on more than just tire treads. Levinson adds, "They made sandwiches out of whatever was in the car. Beef jerky with pickles, peanut butter, horseradish, cheddar cheese and jalapenos. That was delicious. It didn't fuck up my stomach or anything."

Adding to my amusement, Stephens offers some road memories of his own. "I think I laughed a while when we had just arrived in Manhattan after a three hour battle with Republicans on their grand migration into the city for the convention, and Tyson opened the back door to unload our junk when two bottles filled with warm commuter urine fell out at his feet and left his ankles drenched."

Two Gallants is presently on a counter-clockwise tour of the country, making it as far East as the Great Lakes. They will be playing shows in Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Utah, Washington and Oregon. The tour ends in San Francisco, where they will be singing yuletide carols with Seattle's Holy Ghost Revival at the Bottom of the Hill on December 30th. On the verge of becoming

something much more widespread, the band must be wary of the amazing potential and colossal danger of the steps they currently walk, at the top of which hangs either a rope swing or a noose, depending on their approach. Two Gallants, along with other emerging San Francisco groups (Trainwreck Riders, The Heavenly States, Dirty Dirty and Readyville to name a few), represent for the Bay Area an opportunity it hasn't seen since punk died (for the second time) to make way for the explosive Seattle grunge scene in the early nineties: to show a monstrosity formulated and often poorly-tuned world there is a new sound ready to kick the shit out of the standard. Two Gallants is often chronicled as a smooth malt blend of John Fahey, Operation Ivy and Skip James. Listening to their music is like bumping into dear old friends at a bar – maybe even a dive in Cotati – and finding them sitting with even older friends, some of whom you thought had long since died. The ensuing conversations have been released by Alive Records, and can be overheard on Two Gallants' debut album, *The Throes*. 



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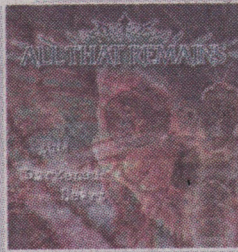
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death cab for cutie

Is Death Cab now more suited for Stretch Limos?

By Stewart Rudy

Indie rock listeners have spent the last year turning in their metaphorical graves. It's no doubt that their once proud, esoteric-listening egos have been bruised by the sudden popularity of long-time indie acts like Modest Mouse and Death Cab for Cutie. Death Cab's proclamation on the first track of its fourth album, *Transatlanticism*, that "This is the New Year," seems to have come true with a new video on MTV and name dropping on *The O.C.* Fans must now find themselves on one side of the great musical debate: has good music finally found the mainstream or have these bands simply sold out? Though neither answer is right, angsty teens and alternative college students will surely continue arguing over the irony of "popular indie rock" as if it were a national healthcare crisis in an election year. I talked with Nick Harmer, Death Cab's bassist, about their new album, their new popularity and, along with it, their new found sense of social and political responsibility.

This was a big year for Death Cab, what was your favorite highlight?
I don't know, there was so much stuff. I'm just so happy and proud of all we've done. I couldn't pick out one thing. Just playing a show in Chicago a few weeks ago with Modest Mouse and The Walkmen was really exciting for us,

and we got a show coming up in Bend, Oregon with The Pixies, which is like a dream come true for me.

What was your involvement in the writing of *Transatlanticism*, and how does it compare to your involvement on previous projects?

My involvement was more toward the recording time, helping with the arrangement of the different instruments. Ben writes the songs and the melodies and then brings them to us and we all add our input to come up with the complete arrangements. I think of making an album for us like

farming. It's not like the chemistry metaphor where everyone brings a little bit of their own ingredient into the mix. It's more like farming. Ben brings the seeds and then maybe I add the water and Chris adds the sunlight to nurture it into growing. I think the rest of the band definitely involved themselves more this time, especially with our new drummer Jason playing such a major part. It really helped to create a good dynamic.

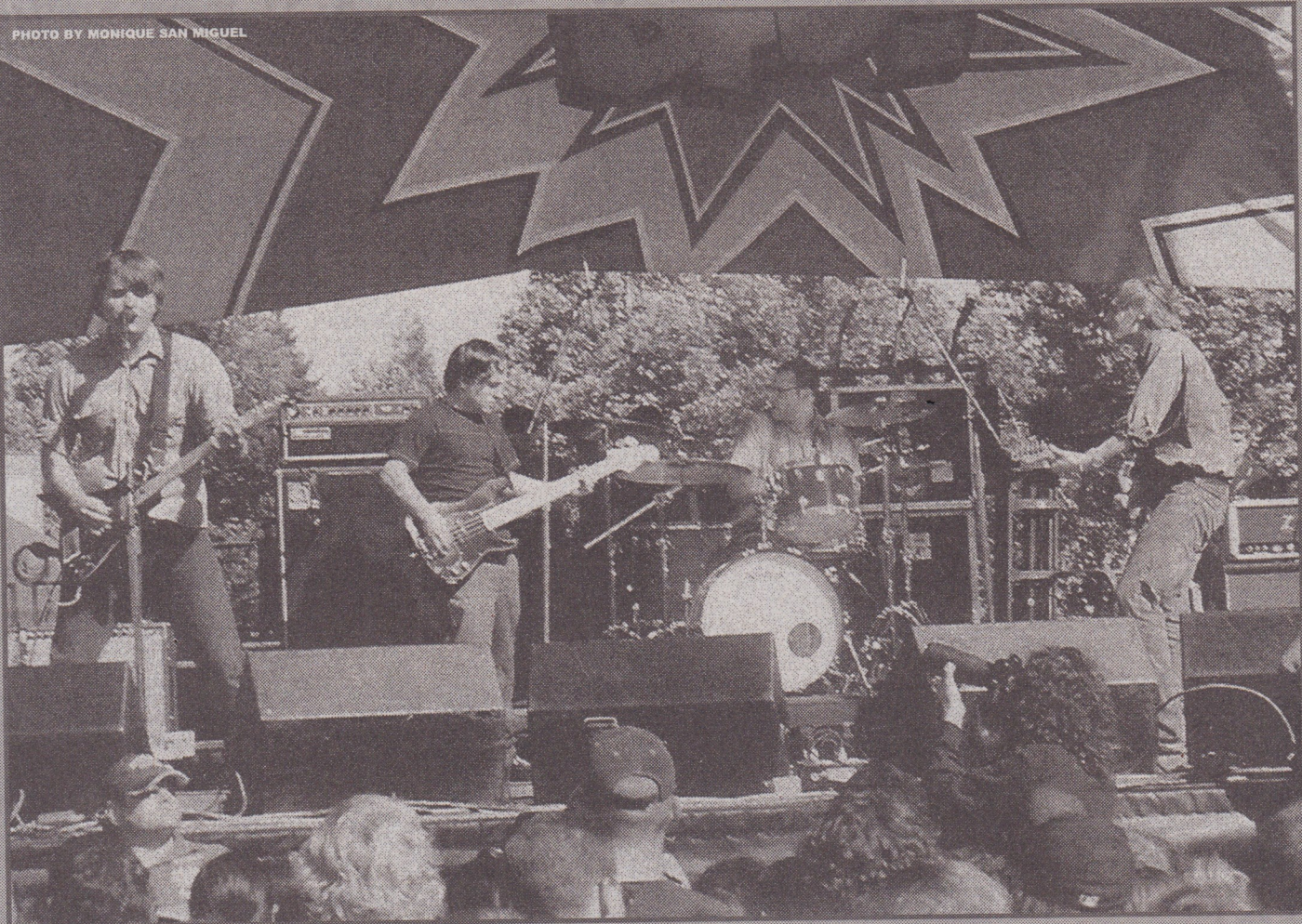
***Transatlanticism* was recorded at Hall of Justice in Seattle and Tiny Telephone in San Francisco. How are the two recording environments different?**

Hall of Justice is Chris's studio, where we recorded *The Photo Album* and *Tiny Telephone* is a studio owned by John Vanderslice. We



PHOTO BY ANDREW PAYNTER

PHOTO BY MONIQUE SAN MIGUEL



wanted to record the bulk of the album in another city, away from home so that we wouldn't be interrupted and people wouldn't be dropping in and Tiny Telephone was just perfect for that. We were very comfortable there. And I think we'll probably try to do the same for our next record: find another out-of-the-way city to hold up in without distractions while we record.

Why do you think bands like yours and Modest Mouse are just breaking into the mainstream after so many years of unrecognized work?

I don't know why. We could sit here and speculate for hours why it happened this year, but I really don't know. We were talking about this the other week when we were in Chicago with Modest Mouse. We were all just really surprised about it.

Do you think the timing seems right?

Yeah, it does seem like the right time though. It just seems to me to be what's happening with a lot of pop culture: it's changing. Just look at movies like *Lord of the Rings* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* being box office hits. Those are some weird things to be so popular. It's the same with music. Bands like the White Stripes could be said to have opened the door for some of this. Someone hears that and it kind of opens the jar to reveal all these other bands that were under the radar for so long.

What's it like hearing your band discussed on the popular teen drama *The O.C.*?

[Laughs] It's something that we just chuckle at. I mean it's great, too. A lot of people hear us on *The O.C.* and are like, "I can't believe they sold that song for this show," but it's not like that at all. The people at the show came to

us last summer and told us they were making this show and that they were real big fans of our music and wondered if they could use a song for an episode. We were like "Television? Sure. Why not?" It's not like this is some publicity trick. We know the people at the show and they're fans of our music, and this is their way of helping us out.

What do you think of the Postal Service and the success that they've found?

It's great. I'm so happy for Ben. It's weird, cause they're a duo who made one record, who never tour and don't really do other shows or press and yet they've been so successful with just the word of it going around.

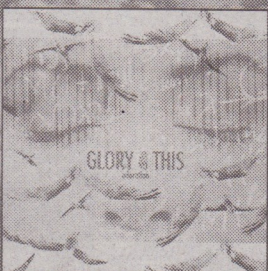
Any other Death Cab side projects we should know about?

I don't think the other projects are worth mentioning next to

Postal Service [laughs]. Actually, Chris does a lot of producing and he's finishing up the new Decemberists album now, and he did a Nada Surf record earlier this year. And Jason and I will just be doing some studio sessions, but whatever our different side projects are, I think it just helps to get back in the studio as Death Cab. We all work on these other things in our down time and when we come back together to work on our next project we all come with new experiences and ideas that will help inform our next work.

What can we expect from Death Cab in the future?

A lot more touring and you can definitely expect a new album. We'll be getting back together in February to start work on the next album, which we'll hopefully also be released next year. ☐



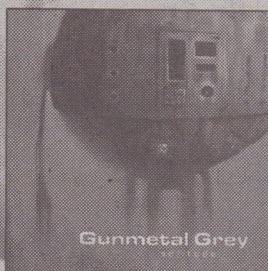
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NO BOUNDARIES FOR THE RIVER CITY REBELS



By Don Sill

“We stand out like a sore thumb,” says the glammed-out punk front man, Dan “Bopper” O’Day, about his band’s recent stint on the Vans Warped Tour this past summer. “Just the way we look and the way we sound and our whole attitude and approach to the music, we just don’t give a shit and we do things for us and not for no one else. Anything goes, there are no boundaries for the Rebel City Rebels.”

“No boundaries,” yeah that seems to sum up The River City Rebels (RCR)—the Vermont based punk outfit who’ve earned quite a reputation with their white-trashy, loose-limbed, raunchy rock ‘n roll style reminiscent to ‘70s punk with a ‘80s metal flare. They’ve been tearing up the stages at the Warped Tour and winning over fans across the nation. But perhaps they earned their biggest buzz last July after they were invited by Duff McKagan to open for Velvet Revolver at Sayreville, New Jersey’s Starland Ballroom where they rattled a few cages and ultimately stole the show.

“The crowd was this young, fresh out of college, very close minded crowd and you could sense that vibe,” Bopper explained.

“I mean we were rocking it on stage and just throwing everything we had at them and the reaction was brutal. Nothing. I’ve seen what happens to bands that open for Velvet Revolver and I was like, Fuck this, this is not gonna happen to us, I wasn’t gonna be that band that everyone forgets. So, I just started running my mouth a much as possible. I yelled out, “So you guys must think we’re a bunch of faggots, huh?” and they were like, “yeah, go back to Gayville, and saying stuff like that. So I said, “Okay, you know what, after the show I think I’m gonna go back and suck some cocks. What do you think about that? Then the place erupts in boos like I’ve never heard before. Juts 20 thousand people booing

us, it was intense. There were cups and shit flying. People were so pissed.”

But that didn’t stagger the singer or any of the RCR boys from jamming out song after song and hitting them harder with each riff and every drum kick. The band never cowered or let up and by the end of the bizarre set Bopper, along with Erik (drums), C.J. (bass), Patti Botox (guitar) Jake (guitar) Rylan (tenor sax) and Brandon (trombone) managed to win over the hostile audience and turn the jeers into cheers. “I thought we were gonna get killed at one point,” Bopped recalled, “but I just smiled because it was the funniest thing. But, everyone loved us at the end. Everyone was cheering, it was great.”

Their latest album, **HATE TO BE LOVED** on Victory Records, continues with the “no boundaries” persona of RCR with a sound that draws inspiration from Bowie, T-Rex, the Stooges, Sex Pistols, The Clash and Iggy Pop, they truly capture and embrace “the ups and downs and down and outs of what it’s like to be young, horny and in love.”

“We’re all in our early twenties and we all love girls so we embrace whatever comes to us,” says Iggy Pop-esque frontman.



"We're definitely having a good time."

The album's 12 raucous old-school punk songs include the sardonic sing-along "Hate To Be Loved," the infectious sex and alcohol anthem "Cloudy Times," the somber, yet up-tempo "No Easy Way Out" and the swaggering and bittersweet "Die Young." The album closes with the dark and sweet ballad "Bloody April," which features a string section. "That record just sums up the last year of my life," explains the front man. "The songs I wrote were about this 17-year old girl that I dated and I was so in love with her. She turned me into an alcoholic because I never drank before her. All this new stuff just happened in my life and most of the songs were written about her. It was just all out of control and didn't make any sense to me. I more or less captured our whole relationship on this record. From meeting her and how I met her to breaking up with her. All these songs are about her."

Bopper pours his love and his pain into each track. RCR blend a bunch of different sub-genres at once into a palatable mix that will appeal to the hardest core punks to the fans of modern pop punk. "You can hear it all on the record, man. I'm just spitting it out. I was so angry and was really bumming," Bopper continued. "but the end result was killer, so. Look man, anything goes."

RCR will be heading back out on the road this fall. For tour info and band updates log to their official website at www.rivercityrebels.com

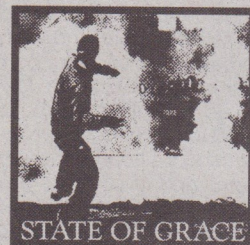
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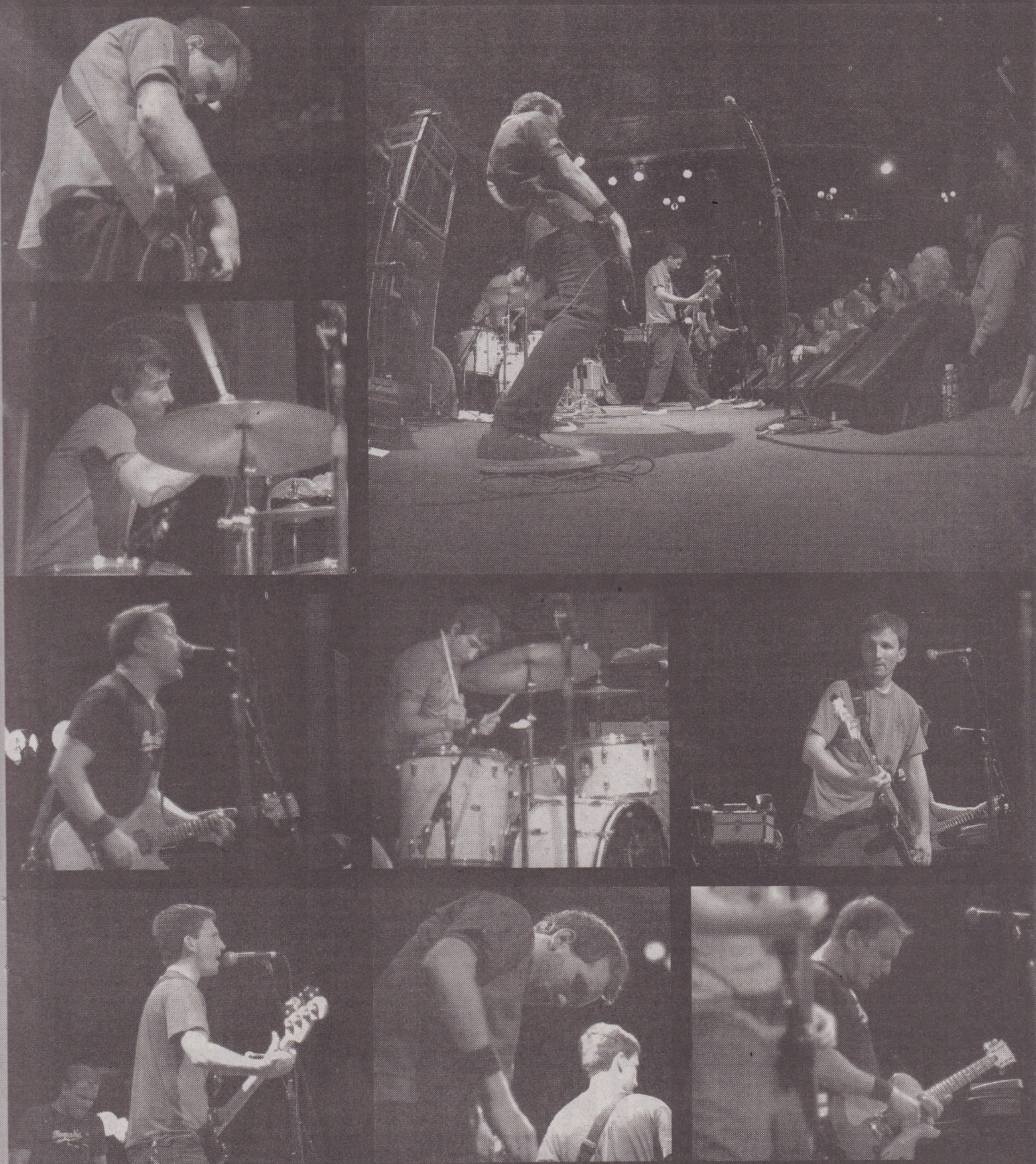
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THOUGHT RIOT



By Patrick Fulton

It officially started the week after Marc Riot's first band broke up. Sitting in his bedroom brainstorming with a former band mate, the two came up with the name that would come to mean what Riot calls, "a normal sense of human contradiction." In the seven years since the band formed in a California city known more for its scandal than its punk rock scene, Modesto's Thought Riot has grown from a small local act throwing shows at the Subway sandwich shop, to mounting several U.S. tours and contributing a track to the recently released *Rock Against Bush vol. 2* compilation. I spoke with vocalist Marc Riot about growing up, being a school teacher and the band's latest release on A-F Records.

Let's talk about the new album, *Sketches of Undying Will*, which has been out since November 2003. Are you happy with it?

I'm really happy with it overall because of the writing. On this record we have two new members, which helped tremendously. I had a really fun time. This record was really hard to work on, though, because you don't want to be faced with that sophomore jinx – a lot of bands release their second record and it either sounds nearly the same as the first one or it just never lives up to the first record. If kids or critics identified you with another band based on your first record, you're faced with breaking out of that mold, so we really paid attention to our own style and making this record different.

How's the response been toward the record?

Well, I've always thought that the fans who listen to the record for their own pleasure matter the most to us, not the critics, and honestly, we've gotten lots of emails saying that people who've seen us have enjoyed the new songs we've played live or that they really enjoy the record. We've been touring behind the album since February, and the tour in March was really good. As more and more kids have picked up on the album, more critics seem to have come around to it, too. I'm really stoked about the responses we've gotten. Plus, we were asked to contribute "You're Gonna Die" to the new *Rock Against Bush* compilation, so things are really picking up.

Does it bother you when people compare you to AFI?

Well, in nearly every review for the last album, we were compared to AFI. As for my voice, I can't help what I sound like and if I try to change it, it fucks up my throat, so. I personally think we're big Good Riddance rip offs. I don't know about everyone else in the band, but on this record I tried really, really hard to bring us away from the "AFI sound."

There have been a few lineup changes in the past couple of months.

Yeah. Adam, our drummer, sustained nerve and tendon damage to his arm, so he couldn't continue playing with us. He's moved on and will be teaching eighth grade algebra this year. Bryan, our guitarist, decided that he couldn't continue touring and being on the road all the time. But there are no hard feelings between us and either one of them. In fact, Bryan is going to be my roommate with in the next few months.

What are your favorite songs on the album?

Well, the hardest songs didn't make the album, because we didn't think we had them up to the level they should have been at. The last song by far, took the longest to write and complete. It was a song that Kelley and our former guitarist Bryan had started and I had



trouble writing lyrics for, especially with that clean guitar part at the beginning. I actually at one point voted to kill it, because I thought it just sounded weird, especially with the clean guitars at the beginning and my lyrics weren't coming out right, but it just turned out to be probably one of the best songs musically, that we did for the album. My personal favorite is probably "Homeland Insecurities."

How did you guys try to improve/what did you try to improve on this album

We tried really hard to stay away from using the same riffs as the last album. I tried very hard to stay away from most of the things on *Shattered* - just to stay away from using typical sounding lyrics. This time around there was a lot of pressure on my lyrics because I sort of had to live up to other people's expectations, so I tried to make sure that I was better at getting my point across and not using too many metaphors.

What's it like to record at Art of Ears studio in San Francisco?

I'd experienced Art of Ears many times before, just from going there with my friends and their bands, plus everyone there is so down to earth and easy to deal with. Some of my favorite bands have recorded there before: Screw 32, AFI, etc. so it was intimidating at first to record in a place where the same bands I grew up listening to had, but the engineer had no ego whatsoever and at some point during the whole process it just

became like we were the only band he'd ever recorded before and that made everything really nice and simple.

What was your family like while you were growing up?

My family was completely normal. I got into punk rock when I was around 16 or 17. Before that, I was really into grunge rock - Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and more regular rock. The first tape I remember bugging my parents to buy for me was a Bon Jovi tape. I got into punk rock through good friends of mine. I had to sort of deal with coming from a normal family, rather than hearing the usual divorced or shitty parental relationship story. My parents were always very insistent on being individualistic and they were always very much focused on education and awareness. My one brother is a film student and my youngest brother is an art student, so they never really held us back in what we wanted to do.

When did you first get interested in music?

I've always liked music, even early on. My dad was a musician and he played drums in his high school marching band and college band. When I was little, he was very much into REM before they started getting big and I remember him telling me about them. He's also the one who introduced me to Pearl Jam. He'd always wanted me to play an instrument of some kind, but I didn't really get into that until I saw Nirvana play "Lithium" on

the MTV awards show and I knew right then and there that I wanted to be on a stage like that and performing in front of people. Just seeing how vibrant Kurt Cobain was on stage gave me a feeling that I knew I wanted to play. In 2000, right after I transferred to Berkeley, I was looking around at people at my school and they were all worried about their careers and what jobs they were going to get and I knew in my heart that I'd be miserable if I didn't do something with music. To this day, if Thought Riot were to break up, I'd form another band next week or I'd be a roadie or a tour manager or something to do with music.

How did you first get into punk?

Well, I guess I would say through Nirvana. From there, I really got into Rancid and Bad Religion, then NOFX and Lagwagon. Good Riddance. I was really into the Santa Cruz sound...bands like Reliance. I was very much into AFI right before *Very Proud of Ya* came out and from hardcore bands like Boy Sets Fire really appealed to me. I think the reason that the Santa Cruz bands appealed to me so much is because they had that perfect mix of hardcore and punk rock or skate punk type of sound.

Do you think Thought Riot has strayed from that sound a bit?

Yes, I think we've strayed a little bit, but you also have to consider how different our band is and how diverse our musical tastes are. I'm

"...we're a group of friends who likes music and plays instruments and just happens to be in a band, and we also like to educate people."

into all the bands listed above, whereas Kelley is into a lot of grind and crust punk. Our former drummer Adam came from a very big ska background and was very much into the various Mike Patton bands. Our bassist is really into Bad Religion, so we're all very different in terms of what we like.

What about the name, Thought Riot?

Well, Thought Riot officially started the week after my first band broke up and I came up with the name one day when I was sitting in my bedroom with my bassist at the time brainstorming for names. I came up with something like "Silent Riot," which in retrospect is absolutely horrid! So, my bassist at the time was sitting on the floor, just drawing a picture and not really paying much attention to what I was saying and he just came up with combining that name with the word "thought" and that was it. As for the meaning of the name now, I think it's come a long way, or at least I know I have. We came up with the name in the summer of 1997, and I've experienced so much more now. I feel the name really reflects a human experience in general - how humans struggle with decisions and thoughts and how often we can get confused - and I think it now reflects a more normal sense of human contradiction.

The website appears to be updated frequently which is kind of refreshing, given that some bands rarely update their sites, aside from posting new shows and things. Was that one of the ideas you came up with?

We look at things as, we're a group of friends who likes music and plays instruments and just happens to be in a band, and we also like to educate people. Personally, I hate going to band sites and never seeing updates or tour comments or anything, and we all agreed on that, so I update the site myself. If I'm not working or practicing or on tour, I'm mostly at home on the computer, so I'll constantly post news stories, or add my thoughts to our lyrics or things like that. When we're on tour, the site stays dead, which is unfortunate, because I'd love to have a little extra money to get a laptop and be able to do a full tour journal or just give daily updates about what's going on with us. I like to use the site as a tool rather than simply a way of promoting the band. I take a lot of care in posting things that we see important and I try to include info about the songs, info about news, political meetings that are going on, etc. What I am trying to do with a new section on the site called "information center," is set up a place where we can inform visitors about current political and social issues, and give them factual information and ways they can learn about things that they might not have access to any other way. For instance, sometimes it's really hard to find good information on the WTO, especially if you don't know much about what you're searching for, so I'd love to set up a place where we can tell people about what's going on with particular organizations and such.

The picture inside the booklet for *Sketches of Undying Will* has you guys reading books. Any significance to that?

The book I'm reading is called the *Best*

Democracy Money Can Buy. We wanted to take a picture this time other than a live picture, which we did for the last record. We played around with ideas and I actually voted to not have any pictures at all in the booklet, but we decided to do something like a hang-out type of picture. We all wanted it to reflect how we really are and how we are when we hang out, so what you have is us just hanging out in my house with books that I told everyone to bring with them. All of us are posing with books we were actually reading at the time, and Kelley has a comic that she really likes behind her book, if you look closely.

What's the Modesto scene like?

Well, I'm pretty much a hermit. If I'm not working, I'm normally at home on my computer, so I don't get out much here in Modesto, but I will say that there is no place for kids who have bands to play here in the city. There are no venues, but there are lots of punk rock kids who live around here, so I have no way of really seeing that part of it. Modesto is located in the Central Valley region of California, which is made up of all these little towns, so there's one scene amongst all the little towns. So if there's a show in one town, kids from all the other towns will go to the one and so on. Modesto had a strong scene when I was a senior in high school. I was in a band called *Piss Off* at that time and we had no venue and a small, but strong scene. We started throwing shows wherever they would let us, and eventually we started having them at a Subway sandwich shop because the owner would let us clear out the tables and have shows there.

What's it like to have to work a real job and also tour?

It's extremely hard to do this, but lately it's been going a lot smoother. I'm a substitute teacher and Adam, our former drummer, was a substitute teacher while he was in the band, so we're not really committed to being at any kind of job or work. And, when you're done with a tour, you can come back and almost work the next day or week right away, so it's made it very easy on us.

What grade do you teach?

I teach all grades k-12.

Is it weird for kids to see you teaching and also being in Thought Riot? Has anyone recognized you?

Actually, it's kind of interesting. I wear just a button down shirt and Dickies, and change my hair a little, so kids don't really notice me until I bring it up that I saw them at a show or that I talked to them at a show and they're surprised then. One day I saw a kid wearing a homemade Anti-Flag shirt and I had an Anti-Flag shirt on under my button down shirt, so that was interesting. One thing I'd like to mention is Kelley. She's made it very public that she suffers from bipolar disorder and it's very hard for her to tour, simply because her medication is so expensive that she often can't afford to take off work to go on tour. When we had gotten word that we were going to be going on tour earlier this year, she was lucky enough to have really great friends who helped her pay for her medication while she was on the road, so that she can stay on her feet.

I saw on an older version of the website that both you and Kelley worked as relay operators.

Yeah it was a telecommunications place where the deaf or hard of hearing person would call into us, and they'd type us a message and we'd dial the number they were calling and relay the information to the person on the other end. It required a lot of accurate typing and also an extreme amount of privacy, and it was interesting work. Recently, I quit so that I could teach.

Has working there made you more aware and made you wear earplugs more often?

Yes definitely! People tell me that I talk loud already! I wear them much more now than before.

What is the band's stance on vegetarianism and veganism?

I feel very strongly about it. I feel very strongly about animal rights. Our two former members Bryan and Adam were not vegetarians, but they were open to the rest of our ideals. Kelley and I are both vegetarians who try to eat vegan as much as possible. It would be very relieving to some day become fully vegan. It's very hard on tour for vegans and somewhat hard for vegetarians. Everyone's eating shitty food, so it's like you're either eating shitty burgers or you're eating shitty fries. Although, I've been able to find some amazing vegetarian and vegan cafes all over the country. There's a place in Fort Worth, Texas that has an amazing vegan cafe. I suppose that if you're in a band that's been around for a while and you have a rider and stuff, it's a little easier for you to be vegetarian or vegan on the road, but for us right now it's difficult.

And what about the band's feelings about straight edge?

I'm the only edger. What's odd is that I get a lot of emails saying "Sign of the Times" is what really made some people become edge, but if you listen to the song, that's not what it's about at all. The story behind that song is that I was in a record store one day and I saw these kids come in who had big X's on everything they had on: their shirts, their hats, their socks, they had patches and everything, and I thought, 'wow, these kids are addicted to being edge.'

How much do you like touring?

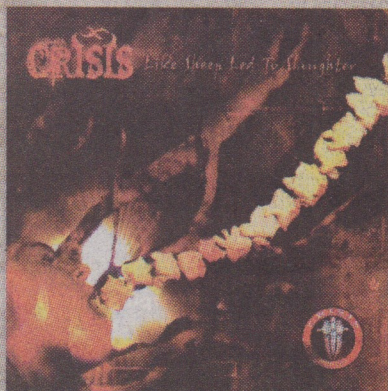
I love it. There are negatives, as with everything, but overall I have a blast when we're on tour. I love adventures and seeing new cities. Most of the kids are really cool and will offer us a place to stay and normally we will if we're between four and five hours away from the next show, but if we're over five hours away, we'll just drive. We're big night drivers, because it's either drive while everyone else is asleep and be there when you wake up, or drive during the day and sit through the ride.

Describe Thought Riot as simply as you can.

My life. I'm always thinking about the band, designing merch, etc. If I could do this eight hours a day, I would be there in a heart beat. Thought Riot is what defines me.

You can keep up with the latest on Thought Riot by visiting their website at www.thoughtriot.com.

Dark tales for the modern age ...



CRISIS "Like Sheep Led To Slaughter"

CRISIS manage to once again offer another true original full of heart-spinning songwriting complexity. Fully showcasing the band's (dis)harmonic balance of dark art metal and experimental hardcore the music inspires relentless waves of primal energy and unmitigated brutality! The result is a cathartic sonic experience fully embraced by the apocalyptic lyrics of Karyn Crisis, who once again, delivers an impressive array of contrasting and insanely captivating unique vocals!

WINDS "The Imaginary Direction Of Time"

The third album from WINDS "The Imaginary Direction of Time," creates an uncompromising combination of classical, progressive and dark metal music with intricate sounds and harmonies. Following in the vein of the previous albums with philosophically charged lyrics, the new album takes WINDS to new heights both in the lyrical and musical field. This is without a doubt the band's most elegant album to date, with a new and added dimension of intricacy due to the increased collective effort in the compositional process.



PECCATUM "Lost In Reverie"

Third album by one of the most artistic and experimental bands from Norway. Featuring Hsador (Emperor) and Hriel (Star Of Ash), "Lost In Reverie" pushes the envelope of musical crossbreeds even further. Blurring the lines of organic performances and electronics, they indulge into delightfully bizarre sonic landscapes and shed new visions of light to dark music.

SUBTERRANEAN MASQUERADE

"Temporary Psychotic State"

"Temporary Psychotic State" is a two track CD featuring over 17 minutes of classic progressive rock. Built upon layers of orchestral arrangements, psychedelic passages and rocking post-rock blasting, this is a truly dynamic release that will appeal to fans of extreme metal as well to those who enjoy edgy, dark progressive rock. The release features a stunning line-up including Paul Kahr (November's Doom), JWW (Hagalloch), Tino LoSicca (Epoch of Unlight), a guest appearance by Andy Winter (Winds) and an ensemble of strings, keyboards and folklore female vocals.



LILITH "The Delores Lesson"

Third album by Lilith. Out of Atlanta, GA they offer a mesmerizing mix of atmospheric melodic death metal with catchy guitar riffery and a variety of both raspy and emotional clean vocals. According to Terrorizer: "Dreary, gothic-tinged atmospheres and lighter, more ethereal passages are cut throughout with short blasts of melodic dark/black metal to forge a sound that is European-influenced, but not blind mimicry. Brooding male vocals predominate, but black metal-inspired rasping occasionally offsets that balance to give the compositions a little more acidic bite."

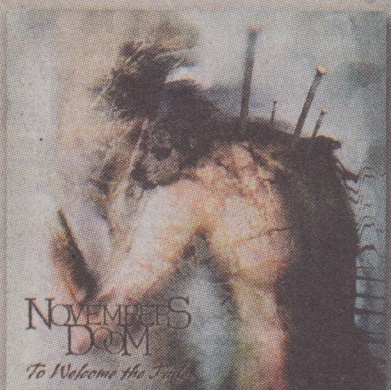
AGE OF SILENCE "Acceleration"

The debut release of this unique Norwegian constellation features Lazare (Borknagar, Solefald) on vocals, Cikind (ex. Khold / Tulus) on bass, Hellhammer (Mayhem, Winds, Arcturus) on drums, Andy Winter (Winds) on keyboards, Extant and Kobbergard (By Dale Light) on guitars. The music can best be described as a mix between thrash metal, progrock, psychedelia and avantgarde insanity. Typically Lazare takes a conceptual journey in the vein of The Matrix or Dark City mixed in with some elaborate futuristic thoughts and concepts relating to the stock market, invoices, and the rat race of human life in general.

NOVEMBER'S DOOM

"To Welcome The Fede" (w/ bonus CD)

Re-release of one of the top doom/death albums to come out of the USA. The album of this prominent band from Chicago, IL includes a bonus CD with the out of print CD "For Every Leaf That Falls", 2 live tracks and a live video of "Within My Flesh."



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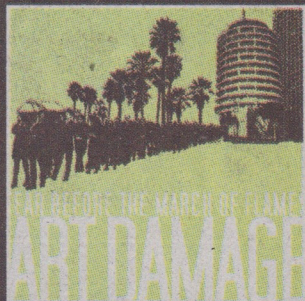
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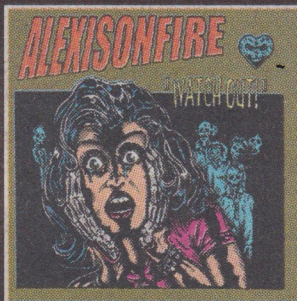
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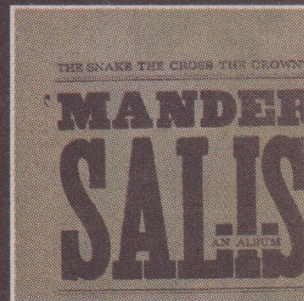
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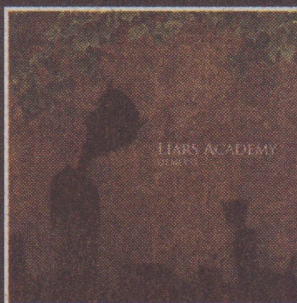
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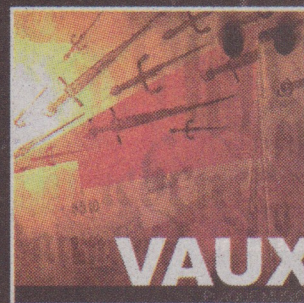
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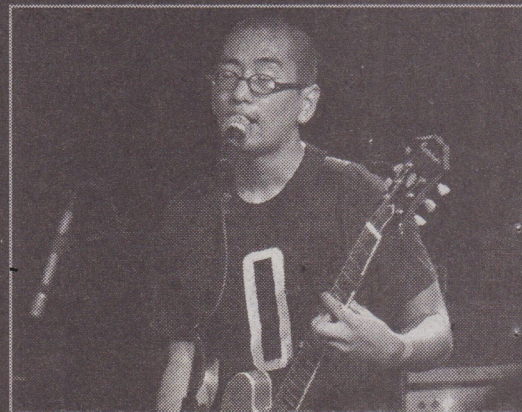
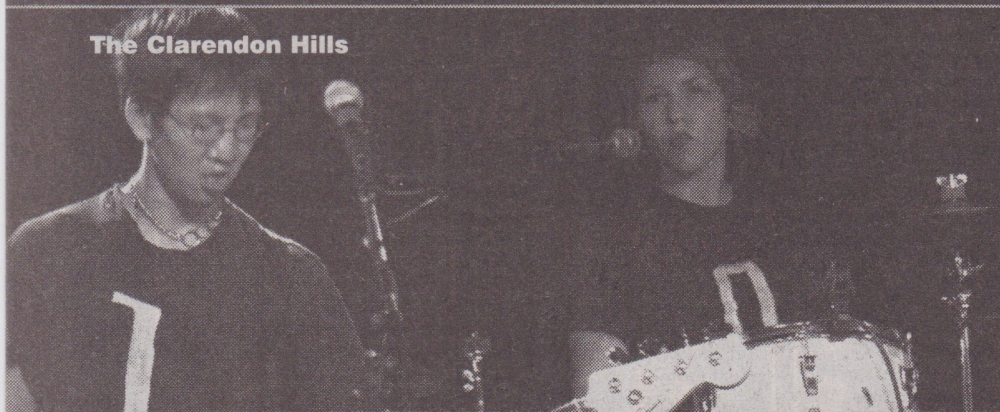
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The Clarendon Hills



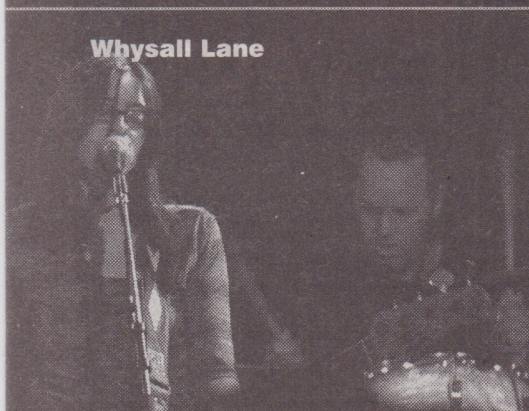
The Skyflakes



Jenny Choi



Whysall Lane



Mike Park



JACK RABID

Look up:
**Percentage who voted
 Black vote in south and in total percentage and
 total and kerry total**
"Ballot Initiative 36."
Dashale spelling

OUR TARNISHED, SUDDENLY CREAKING DEMOCRACY, AND WHY THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE SHOULD BE SCRAPPED OR ALTERED

The 2004 election outcome is likely still dominating discourse by the time you read this. Since it occurred only days before my deadline for this magazine, however there's not much that can be said about it here different from what you've already been bombarded with elsewhere, and it would serve no one for me to add to it unless or until I've had a good long time to digest the numbers and think, divorced from the emotional reaction everyone pro or con has had. Instead, I consider this a good opportunity to look beyond the earthquake of the result and at the process that finally forced a good sliver of America that remained undecided between two candidates with starkly opposed positions to finally choose. In fact, since it is easier to be coldly analytical about that instead, over issues for *all* our elections and not just this one, perhaps that gives a writer a better perspective on the whole sorry, broken-down process itself, before we get caught up in the ramifications of the result.

Let's be clear: The mud has been slung in almost every one of our previous 42 presidential elections, ever since the nasty one between Vice President John Adams, Federalist, and former Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Democrat-Republican, in 1796 and 1800 (which together ended forever George Washington's idealistic illusion of nonpartisan government). But in the last half-dozen elections, the biggest affront to our democracy wasn't the campaigns, it was our indifference to them. More than 40 percent of eligible American voters never bothered to turn up once every lousy four years to pull a lever (let alone participate in state and local races). Of these, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, "Among registered voters who failed to cast ballots, one-in-five reported they were 'too busy' to vote."

It always kills me that in other nations of the world, people are fighting and dying just for the mere right to vote, as they suffer under dictatorships that deny that fundamental participation. Or we risk the necks, spleens, limbs, and spines of our own kid troops in foreign lands to supposedly restore that right, while here a whopping 94 million out of 205 million registered adults can't get their sorry asses down to a polling place twice a decade (figures from the 2000 election). Heck, 30% of those eligible never even bother to register in the first place! Then one even wonders how much of the 50-60% who do vote remotely inform themselves beforehand. "I would rather have a beer with Bill Clinton or George Bush" is surely no criteria. And whatever your feeling about the 2000 Supreme Court decision that handed the power of the presidency to someone who probably lost, we're left with this sobering, stark fact: With an official 50,456,002 votes, our current president took office with the blessing of a puny 24.6% of registered voters. Disgusting.

But all of that seemed changed this year. It apparently took an election debacle of outrageous proportions, a stunning domestic terrorist attack, a highly dubious war and highly-resisted occupation, the deaths of 1,100 brave soldiers (and 10,000 Iraqi civilians), the shaming images of prisoner torture and sexual humiliation, and an evangelistic, faith-based, hard right administration's assault on the Constitution, the environment, and the middle-class to rouse the average apathetic American voter into finally taking their momentous duty seriously—no matter who they chose. There clearly was a much greater interest and participation in 2004 than in any election since turnout began its steep decline after the 1960

Kennedy/Nixon clash. And no matter who ended up winning this time, our electorate was finally disabused of the shabby and shallow, often-heard notion that who governs us does not matter, that there is no difference between the two principal parties and the candidates they field for chief executive. Just in time, too: considering the cataclysm of the last four years, this was not only the most important such contest in our country since 1860 (the last time our nation was this polarized), but as a result the whole world was watching us intently.

(Too bad then, the overwhelming decider was something as transparently ignorant as religion—ignorant in the sense that we're not supposed to be a theocracy, but Christians overwhelmingly voted for their favorite Christian candidate of the two running, rather than deciding based on the actual performance—good or bad—of the president vis a vis the results of his policies. Perhaps this is even worse than picking the one would we like to have a beer with. It's basic devolution. We would never judge our CEO or sports team managers on their strident religious faith, as being inherently superior to their company or team's performance. Yet we discard such considerations in a presidential campaign as if they were immaterial. And 60% of our registered voters *still* didn't vote, even in this election. How anyone registered could have failed to vote in 2004 is completely and utterly mystifying. We remain a fundamentally disconnected society, no matter what photos you saw of long lines on your TV. They should be twice as long!)

Given our elections' supreme importance, then, here is the real kicker behind it all: It is a crime how shoddily they are run, and how little they conform to the ideal of democracy. There's so much about them that has gone so wrong, one barely knows where to start. There are certain germs that are responsible for the virulent disease of voter apathy. The primary one is the anachronistic inanity known as the Electoral College. But there is also the disgusting practice of district gerrymandering, the outrageous disenfranchisement of voters that skews along poverty and minority lines, the capricious, arbitrary, and untrustworthy systems of recording the votes themselves (which also disproportionately screw the poor), the ridiculously difficult registration process, the fickle primary schedule, and the deleterious influence of big money. All of the above are totally solvable, but our nation has so far lacked the will and the guts to effect the necessary changes.

Of these, the scrapping or amending of the Electoral College is the most obvious necessity. Indeed, I can think of nothing that has dampened voter enthusiasm and attendance more than this shortsighted, outdated bargain made by the leaders of 13 divided colonies in 1787 in order to secure passage of the Constitution. The 2000 election should have been our blatant wake-up call that we needed to immediately scuttle this 213 year-old error with its blatant disdain for the will of the people. Check out these two quotes, the first from Massachusetts delegate Elbridge Gerry, who later invented the aforementioned 'Gerrymandering.' "A popular election in this case is radically vicious. The ignorance of the people would put it in the power of some one set of men dispersed through the Union, and acting in concert, to delude them into any appointment."—July 25, 1787. The second is from Virginia delegate George Mason, later the catalyst for the Bill of Rights: "The extent of the country renders it impossible that the people can have the requisite capacity to judge of the respective pretensions of the candidates."—July 17, 1787. What could be less democratic than a process intentionally designed to safeguard the selection of the president from the people themselves? George W. Bush was the first president to lose the popular vote and still be given the job since Benjamin Harrison in 1888. (In retrospect, late 19th Century Americans blew a golden chance to fix this undemocratic distortion then, since it also happened in 1876.) Yet still there is little or no outcry to throw out a system that makes no sense and is transparently unfair.

Of course, defenders of the College tend to be from smaller states, the very folks who sought it in the first place. And one must pay heed to their concerns. What you hear the most is, "If the College was abolished, candidates would spend all their time in big states with the most people like

JACK RABID

California, Texas, and New York, and would have no further interest in the likes of Iowa, North Dakota, and Delaware." Sounds good, but it's blatantly untrue in actual practice and statistical result as well. If there had been no College in 2000, the final tally was 50,456,002 for Bush, and 50,999,897 for Gore. So out of the 105,405,100 cast, Gore won by a puny 543,895 votes. In other words, he needed the 638,517 he received from the people of Iowa and the 422,768 he got in Arkansas. *He needed the aggregate total of all the small states combined every bit as much as what he got from the more populous, urban states.*

We see this in our own New York State elections constantly. Candidates who clean up in New York City still sometimes lose the statewide race, as when mayor **Ed Koch** lost the governor's race to **Mario Cuomo** in 1982, and as Cuomo himself lost to **George Pataki** 12 years later. Although they may be far more dispersed, 11 million of New York's 19 million residents don't live in the city; you can't ignore their concerns and expect to win. Likewise on the national level. If the citizens of Lake Placid, Saratoga, Orchard Park, Ithaca, Oneonta, Montauk, Horseheads, Woodstock, and Moyers Corners, NY don't need Electoral College protection from the tyranny of sharing statewide elections with me and my fellow New York City voters, then it's further true that the people in Ames, Iowa City, Council Bluffs, Cedar Falls, and Des Moines don't need such protection from New York, California, and Texas. Since the biggest states are, as demonstrated, more diverse than just urban New York City, L.A., San Francisco, Houston, and Dallas, candidates clearly ignore smaller communities or smaller states at their own peril.

So much for what we'd lose if we bagged the College. The first thing we would gain is the unquestionably fairer concept of each person's vote counting equally. And I think we're owed a reasonable explanation of why that shouldn't be paramount in the first place; shouldn't a president have to represent us *all equally*, not proportionally by such weighted averages as the College represents? Why should a vote by someone in Keene, NH count nearly twice that of someone in equally rural Portersville, CA? (The math: New Hampshire has four electoral votes, meaning one for every 320,000 of its citizens; California has 55 electoral votes, meaning one for every 618,000.) How is this fair? Is the farmer or rancher in New Hampshire, Montana, Wyoming, or Alaska, really worth two votes compared to one in California, New York, Florida, Ohio, or Texas? Or that of any city dweller? This is why the College is such a distortion. But even if the College is just our way of giving a leg up to the small and weak (call it affirmative action for the population challenged), what is far worse is that it has done such *tremendous* damage to voter interest and participation in states big and small alike. For example, I live in the third biggest state of all, population-wise, behind California and Texas, and have voted in seven presidential elections in 24 years. In that time, neither party's candidate has ever campaigned in my state that I recall. In two straight races that were otherwise neck and neck, neither Bush, nor Gore, nor Kerry ever set foot here after their primaries, except to fundraise. Not one of the attack ads that blanketed Cleveland, Santa Fe, and Miami, say, aired on our powerful local stations. Does that make sense?

It's so skewed, that Bush was actually *criticized* for "wasting" time in California the last week before the 2000 vote, in the quixotic quest to overcome Gore's insurmountable lead in the polls there. What does that say of our process, when a candidate was "stupid" to actually appeal to voters in our biggest state instead of totally disregarding them?

Meanwhile, 40 out of 50 other states' populations, big or small, suffer this same total neglect every four years. Some like New York, and equally locked-up (small) red states like Idaho and Montana, don't ever seem to matter. Delegates Mason, Gerry, Franklin, Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson, et. al. failed to foresee sophisticated polling. For a long time it's been well known in advance which States are evenly divided and which ones a candidate has already sown up. Can we really blame the voters in those 40 states for poor turnout, when they're told for months theirs has been won? It's especially bad if you are a Bush enthusiast in Nyack, NY or Santa Ana, CA or a Kerry supporter in Lagrange, TX. Is this the way to get

people excited about their civic duty?

If this wasn't bad enough, there is also the stench of that old canard, racial divide. As we all know, after the post-Roosevelt Democratic Party gradually made an about-face decision to embrace the civil rights movement rather than oppose it, the one-time party of the Confederacy flip-flopped with the one-time party of Lincoln and the South changed control. (See Nixon, re: "Southern Strategy.") Every election, there is now a swath of red states down there as if blazed by a new Sherman's March, in place of what used to be a solid wall of blue pre-1964. That is nothing for our country or that region to be proud of, and it's another legacy of the College's damage. It becomes utterly glaring when one notes that 92% of blacks in the South voted for Gore in 2000. (In fact, nationally, black vote went 90% for Gore, 8% for Bush. Four years later, Kerry once again garnered a staggering 90% of their national vote!) Yet, even in hotly contested Florida, 92% of their votes ended up counting for squat. And this is the norm. In 1996, the figures weren't much better: 87% for Clinton, 10% for Dole.

Let's face it: Southern blacks couldn't be clearer in their mass opposition to the Republican party's abuse and neglect of their concerns and issues, judging from this tremendous landslide over all the many southern states from Virginia to Texas. Yet it's as if they never even voted in the last two elections. For example, were there no College, their 2000 election votes would of course have blended in with Gore's 51,000,000 (of which around 10.5 million came from blacks). You can then extrapolate this for every other race, ethnic, religious, or other demographic group similarly shut out by one party's effective supremacy in their state or region. But this example is a particularly repugnant consequence of the College.

And this is before any efforts are made by local ruling Republican groups to suppress their vote via shady or illegal means. Were there no College, it would neuter that imperative. In 2000 Florida, we were left with this repulsive fact, in a state "won" by only 537 votes: As the *Washington Post* reported, "Ballots cast from black neighborhoods throughout Florida were four times as likely to go uncounted as those from white neighborhoods. Nowhere was the disparity more apparent than in Duval County, where 42 percent of 27,000 ballots thrown out came from four heavily Democratic black precincts." This, of course, was already highly suspicious in a state where George Bush's brother is the governor, and the highest election official was a Republican campaign co-chair (the odiously partisan **Katherine Harris**). But without the College, we'd have never known her name.

What difference would it make to Florida Republicans if Democratic blacks voted or not, if they were just part of more than 50 million Democratic votes nationwide, rather than being the crucial determiner of the most important "Swing State?" Indeed, what would any of us, left or right or in-between, care if a state "Swung" or not? How easy would it be to eradicate the entire concept of a "stolen" election, like 2000's for Bush, 1960's for **Kennedy** (Democrat) over Nixon (thanks to malicious fraud in Cook County, IL), and 1824 for **John Quincy Adams** over **Andrew Jackson** (in the infamous "corrupt bargain"—name says it all), if we just did away with this absurdity? And how much harder would it be for dirty tricks to affect all 50 states' total instead of one of the few states known to be contested?

Consider this as well: Having cast our votes decidedly for Gore in 2000, New York State citizens, both Republican and Democrat alike, have suffered a transparent cold shoulder from our president ever since. The only time he ever came here, really, was because of 9/11—and after making political hay of that, by using shots of our buildings burning for his reelection bid, and then holding his convention here, he's still short-changed our whole state on promised rebuilding relief and terrorism protection money—despite howls of protest from our local congressmen. (I don't doubt that "red states" citizens elsewhere might have been similarly and unfairly punished by Clintonian neglect the last decade.) This is what the College has wrought. What does a president have to gain, politically, in helping a state he couldn't win if he ran another 10 times? (But Bush

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feels neighboring Pennsylvania's pain, since neither party has effective control of its electoral votes. He's been there 41 times since he took office. And he's been to Iowa twice as often as California, even though the latter's population is 20 times greater!)

The consequences aren't small. As New York Senator **Chuck Schumer**, Attorney General **Elliot Spitzer**, and even Republican New York City Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** have bitterly complained, after our city was attacked by fundamentalist Islamic terrorists twice in eight years, and we remain their prime target, our State is nevertheless receiving \$5.47 per resident in federal anti-terrorism funds, while Vice President **Cheney's** state Wyoming is getting seven times that: \$38.31 per resident. Were we a solid "red state," would that still be the case? Or would the president be hot on the stump, thundering from his bully pulpit about the urgent need to rectify this?

Of course, as I write, Bush supporters love the Electoral College, because it allowed the election's actual loser (popular vote) to gain control of our government four years ago—without which he wouldn't have been able to use the supreme power of the presidency to mobilize his supporters on such a highly personal (religious) level. But those same supporters then cluck their tongues at our "polarized nation," apparently unable to grasp why Gore supporters remained so angry and still *hate* their standard bearer more than any president since **Harding**. Again, a president must serve us all, including those who didn't vote for him. The College has given us hatred and an abiding sense of rip-off, the sense that we are stuck with someone who we didn't vote for and now can't dislodge. It's bad enough when it's the will of the majority. It's positively acrid when it is not. This is hardly healthy for our republic. It will be no less so one day in the future when the roles are reversed.

Of course, you know and I know we are stuck with the Electoral College, like many are stuck with bad inlaws. It's not going away anytime soon, no matter how many intelligent people became convinced four years ago that it should. For sadly, this rubbish system can only be given the boot it deserves via constitutional amendment. And unfortunately, the bar for one of those babies is set so high, it not only prevents idiotic ideas like banning Gay Marriage, but also thwarts perfectly forward-thinking ideas like this. That's partly why it took us until freaking 1920 for women to be even *allowed* to vote. The founding fathers, even with their distrust for the citizen voter, established the amendment process because they didn't feel their document was sacrosanct, and that it needed to be updated with time to reflect changing facts or correct such obvious deficiencies as they became clear. But the hurdle they devised is about as big as the one the Wizard set for helping Dorothy get back to Kansas (a perpetual red state). Namely, two-thirds of both houses of Congress must approve the amendment, and then three quarters of the States must ratify it. Fuggeddabout it.

Partisan politics being what it is, we can't get the two parties to agree on whether lite beer "tastes great" or is "less filling," let alone something of this magnitude, so two-thirds of congressmen is a Yao Ming-tall order. And even if they could somehow be persuaded, then the smaller states who know they gain the most from the College's distortions in their favor would fall in line to vote "no" on ratification faster than you or I could pronounce the words "hanging chads" or "butterfly ballot" (or for those who know their 1960 Illinois history, "vote early and vote often"). What would it take to produce a groundswell equal to such a Herculean task? Probably nothing less than a second election debacle, and even then, maybe not.

It is for these reasons that a dissatisfying but more attainable compromise has lately been floated. And it may well be a case where, like the original 1787 compact between large and small states that produced this contemptible College in the first place, it would clearly be better than nothing. This idea proposes to replace the "winner take all" provision of the College with electoral votes being assigned in proportion to the vote totals in each state. For instance, the result of the Supreme Court's decision (itself partisan along party lines) to stop 2000's Florida's Supreme Court-ordered recount (also partisan along party lines), meant that all of the state's 25 electoral votes were awarded to Bush and 0 went to Gore.

Were there proportional assignment, Bush would have gotten credit for 13 electoral votes and Gore 12, with **Ralph Nader** falling short of even one. (Say goodbye to the tiny-total spoiler in this scenario.) It's easy to see why this would be better than the current system. For example, the 4,567,429 folks that voted for Bush in California (as opposed to the 5,861,203 for Gore) out of 10,965,856 would have contributed 22 electoral votes to Bush instead of a big fat zippo. And while Gore would lose those 22, in Texas he would have picked up 12 instead of nada for the 2,433,746 that gave him the nod there.

The result is obvious. Certainly, no political commentator would lambast Bush for having "wasted" valuable home-stretch time campaigning in California—or anywhere else, for that matter, if it meant that he could raise his proportional electoral votes. In 2004, it would have meant both candidates would have visited my state and spoken to its voters (not just to our fat cat campaign contributors), and to yours too if you were in the 80% of states mostly neglected. This would replace the farcical spectacle of watching both candidates crisscross the same 11 states every day for four months like connect the dots. It was a steady diet of Ohio, New Mexico, Michigan, Florida, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Minnesota and back again like a merry-go-round, sometimes passing within a few miles of each other. With proportional assignment, suddenly *all* states would have been "in play." It would have meant heightened voter interest across the board, whether blacks in Georgia or Republicans in Massachusetts. No one would feel his or her vote was for nothing, as if they had overslept or plum forgot to show up. Every vote would return to being critical, "from the redwood forest, to the Gulf Stream waters" and all in between, even in the face of the most precise advance polling. Which also means no president could ever punish or otherwise ignore any state whose majority never votes for his party. He (or she) would *always* need as many votes as possible. And the president would truly govern for the support of all, rather than the indifferent presidency we New Yorkers (of both parties) just suffered and without a doubt are about to suffer again like Bill Murray's *Groundhog Day*. (Maybe I should move to Wyoming. Is it nice in Moose this time of year? With all that extra terrorism funding, I'll bet Jackson Hole isn't blowing up any time soon!)

Finally, if it didn't mean the total eradication of dirty tricks, racial voter suppression, and other deliberate disenfranchisement, it would surely lessen it. Again, even a proportional College would still monkey with the vastly superior and infinitely simpler one-man-one-vote concept by this weight-by-state distortion, so the incentive would remain for state leaders and party operatives to employ such methods. But it would surely be much less, if the difference amounted to one electoral vote in their state going from one candidate to the other (i.e. a swing of two votes, one gained for you, one lost for him), instead of 25, like in dirty-rotten, brother-is-the-governor Florida 2000. And it would decrease the chances of the ugly encounters we saw on TV in 2004 between blacks at polling places down there and white Republican lawyer monitors (who otherwise never show their faces in such poor districts).

Lastly—and perhaps most importantly—whereas it's nigh impossible to amend the constitution, proportional assignment is in fact within more immediate reach. Since the College has always been controlled by each individual state, each has always had the power to set its own rules. Proportional assignment is already being considered by one state, Colorado, via "Ballot Initiative 36." The bad news is that as we go to press, polls indicate this effort is going down to certain defeat. It's hard to convince the residents of one lone state to dilute the spoils of their electoral votes if no other states join them simultaneously. In practical terms, with only two narrowly divided parties, the split of Colorado's nine votes would nearly always be 5-4. So why would either candidate want to spend time campaigning there for what amounts to only one electoral vote? It will take a large number of states at once to enact this step. The only thing that makes this seem possible in the future is that there really is a widespread dislike of the Electoral College, and proportional voting feels ultimately more fair to most people. It's an enlightened state that

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makes the leap for the common good, rather than their own. (Like California's referendum on funding stem cell research, which I was glad to see passed. Now all 50 States will benefit even though only one is footing the bill—blatantly unfair, but completely enlightened, and perhaps it will lead to more jobs and industry for Californians for putting that unfairness aside.) So with any luck, sometime in the future, in some other state it might take root, and provide the first step towards ridding ourselves of a scourge that's outlived any onetime usefulness.

Now for the other flaws in the system. The abhorrent gerrymandering being practiced by **Tom Delay** and his boys in Texas is really no worse than the brand meted out in equally dolorous slices by their rival Democrats in other states. If Texas is novel in any way, it's that the Texas Republicans didn't wait for a new census (every 10 years), and the redistricting that accompanies it, to take advantage of their political majority in that state—in this case wiping out sensible lines set by judges, not politicians. The result is nauseating. One new district, Texas's 19th, replaced a reasonable rectangle (the former 17th) with what looks like the strangest jigsaw puzzle piece you've ever seen containing around 35 right angles in every direction from Abilene to Lubbock—all to successfully unseat a 26-year Democratic congressman on the Agriculture Committee, **Charles W. Stenholm** (who, showing how absurd this really is, is pro-life and regularly voted conservative!). In all, five formerly "safe" Democratic congressmen lost as expected in 2004, because the new lines were painstakingly—let alone deliberately—drawn just to unseat them, using computers to pinpoint demographic party data. (Even Gerry would be impressed.) This kind of unapologetic, "we don't care what anyone thinks" disgusting hardball is fully intended to damage the effective representation of the people by the candidate of their choice. The result has been ever-more lopsided, ludicrous-looking district shapes that resemble salamanders (thus the term Gerrymander), snakes, paramecium, and bats—even doughnuts.

(It's so transparently despicably undemocratic, that in late October, the Supreme Court admonished a Texas lower court that it better think twice, and good and hard, about its inane ruling upholding this bad joke, or else they might likely be forced to rule it unconstitutional. Considering how this Court feels about State's rights, that speaks volumes. Too bad their ruling came too late to fix this abomination in time for the 2004 election.)

This too depresses voter turnout and overall interest. As *The Economist* noted recently, "Redistricting has made a nonsense of elections to Congress. No more than 30 seats of the 435 in the House of Representatives are competitive. In 2002 four out of five congressmen won their races by more than 20%. This is not just unfair, it puts people off from voting; why bother in those 400 districts where the result is a foregone conclusion?" (And doubly so if the presidential vote is also "foregone" in your state!) Things are so bad, that in 80 of those 400 districts, no one from the other party bothered to even run against the incumbent. And of those rookies that gamely took on the uphill challenge, 200 of them lost by more than 40%. How many actually won? A grand total of four. (Four other incumbents were defeated in their own party's primary, the real race they fear, since otherwise their current re-election rate is 99%!

State boundaries have been fixed since they entered the union. There is no opportunity for politicians to change them towards insuring an increase in their party's number in the Senate (and with it, control of the body), and to preserve their incumbencies. Thus, Senate races, where all State residents can participate, are nearly always hotly contested—and several incumbents usually lose. Just six years ago, New York's own 18-year champion of the pork and powerful Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs committee member **Alfonse D'Amato**, was easily unseated by Schumer, and no one thought it odd. And in 2004, even the Senate Minority Leader, **Tom Daschle** went down. But again, since by a different (Ben Franklin-suggested) compromise of 1787, the Senate gives equal weight to all states (meaning small states once again have undue influence per their populace), and the House is pegged directly to exact population to make up for that, non-democracy in the House means that

large states have been handed the bag again. Wonder no further at the forces that drove the unequal terrorism funding, which means that small states are overprotected and the large, more urban ones that actually interest terrorists are shafted.

For gerrymandering, the remedy is easier and already being put in place in one astute state. A fed-up Iowa has taken the job of drawing districts away from its legislature and handed it instead to an independent commission. The taint of partisanship is removed, and their districts' shapes look sensible instead of twisted like pretzels or undulating like sound waves! Sometimes the hardest thing is just to have a precedent set; other states should follow Iowa's lead, and soon.

The next item on the list, how we actually record our votes, has come under sudden mass scrutiny after what happened in Florida four years ago. Therefore, politicians of both stripes were finally forced to address what had already been busted for so long, and threw a bunch of money at the problem. Problem not solved. With the introduction of touch screen voting, worries about computer program glitches abound (as *The Economist* also noted, "In one 2002 Indiana contest, 5,352 voters somehow produced 144,000 votes!" Yikes). There also remains the worry of dishonest tampering with computer machines that include no paper trail (leaving no method to verify the vote totals recorded in the event of suspicion or mandate for a recount). This new technology has exacerbated the problem rather than alleviating it! Both parties mobilized teams of lawyers at polling places nationwide in 2004. What a mess. Were the election, as close as it had been in 2000 once again, we would have been in for a major legal battle that would have made 2000 look easy. Furthermore, each state district determines for itself what to do, so even within states there remain a hodgepodge of different systems and methods in place. Someone who moves a lot in state might find himself first voting by lever in creaking old machines, then by paper two years later, then datavote, then the dreaded chad-infected punch card, then touch screen, then optical scanning. And again, the poor (mostly minorities) have historically gotten screwed the most, since they live in districts hardest-pressed to find the funds to upgrade their machines or methods. And since poor, urban polling places have fewer—and less reliable—voting machines, they're more prone to long lines (two to three hours), which encourage such voters to give up and go home. There was no butterfly ballot in the wealthy Florida suburbs in 2000, because such districts' brimming coffers allowed them to upgrade long ago. This is one of the reasons why minorities suffer the highest rates of having their votes thrown out even without dirty tricks. Apart from the Electoral College's already discussed vote weighting, why should a poor person's vote count less than someone in a community with means? None of this inspires confidence going forward to 2006 and 2008.

But again, the solution is easy. The Federal government should mandate one universal method by a certain date in the future (say, 2012) after being studied by a bipartisan commission study. And surely the clear winner should be easily marked paper ballots (no hanging chads) with this recorded by optical scan, and the completed ballot itself dropped in a lockbox after the voter verifies the results through a window screen—much like an ATM transaction, only the receipt is kept by the machine should it be needed to be inspected later for any reason.

Finally, it's time to take three rights away from the states that have also been prone to partisan abuse. One, it makes no sense that some states allow Felons to vote when they finish serving their time, and others don't. Apart from the human rights issue, it's another example of wanton, manipulative exploitation—and again, Florida leads the way, though it's not the lone state at fault; When Republican are in power, there is a direct incentive to withhold that vote in their state, since the highest percentage of felons are statistically minorities. And, as seen in Florida, they also use the felon list to actively purge non-felons from the rolls, without redress, to greater suppress the minority vote. It took a court order in favor of a news organization, which sought the secret list, to even expose that this 2000 Florida shenanigan was being abused again in 2004! Why do we put up with this? Is this a banana republic?

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Secondly, there is no rhyme or reason why a handful of the 50 States ostensibly made John Kerry the Democratic nominee out of dozen contenders simply because their primaries were earlier than everyone else's. What makes Iowa and New Hampshire's citizens more important than my state (yet again! Damn it!!!), and why should the registered Democrats in more than half the other states be saddled by their choice? This, too, is an outrage. Here again, a rotating system should be established, so that those states effectively shut out this year will move up to the front of the pack in subsequent years. And more states should vote together earlier in the season to insure the most wanted man or woman is the pick of registered party voters.

Thirdly, the voting registration process itself also needs a Federal guidelines overhaul. All persons should be allowed to register right up to voting day with valid proof of eligibility and local residence, and their name and social security number should be immediately entered into a national database and checked to prevent over-voting fraud. A recent *Daily News* story revealed that a fair number of people voted in both New York and Florida in 2000. Neither state bothered to check with the other about their rolls, so anyone with homes in two different states could easily game the system. This small step would stop it. And in the meantime, even the busy, lazy, confused, and the untalented could still register and vote. Day-of-voting registration is already in place in some states, resulting not surprisingly in demonstrably higher turnout rates.

There are still more places where the system is broken. (Ex- *Nirvana* bassist **Kris Novoselic** has just released a book I look forward to reading, *Let's Fix This Broken Democracy!*) Someone much smarter than me will have to propose a way to finally rid big money influence from our elections- it would have to be something that can actually pass a congress so used to sucking on that cash milk campaign donation teat. The most recent bipartisan attempt to do just that, the **McCain/Feingold** act, was a strong attempt in this direction before it got watered down by the very congressmen who stood to lose the most from its original form. So as the "Swift Boat For Truth" and "Texans For Truth" groups took turns bashing each other's candidate, funded by the same big money, it's clear that the act's provisions have been breached in an end-around. And even with the act's passing, both campaigns took in more money than ever, around a billion wasted bucks largely spent on the awful drone of distorted negative TV ads (in only 11 states, poor buggers), when we have so many problems that could have used that "charity" instead. In Europe, the state helps pay for campaigns and TV stations are compelled to let the parties have their time for free. It's time to try that here, too.

From all this, one thing has been made apparent. Our democracy is tarnished, tattered, and creaking. Our voting system is the very definition of separate and unequal in all senses of those words (so much for the principal of the establishment clause that the Republicans on the Supreme Court desperately relied on to decide Bush Vs. Gore). Once in power, our executive and legislative branches spend an inordinate amount of time insulating themselves from democratic accountability and crushing the access and power of the other parties, while granting it constantly to lobbyists and wealthy contributors instead. That problem becomes especially inflames when one party

takes total control of both the executive and legislative branch, as was the case from 2002-2004 and now has considerably widened with Democratic losses not only in Texas, as discussed, but overall. And since the executive branch chooses the third and final branch, the judicial one, there's less than zero democracy there, either. In fact, his victory in his pocket, and a clear majority this time, Bush will likely appoint three new arch-conservative Supreme Court justices in the **Scalia/Thomas** vein in addition to several hundred lower court ones with even less compunction or opposition hindrance, and we'll be stuck with their predictable decisions for decades, even though our country is evenly split! This is just the last indignity of de-representation that the people must endure.

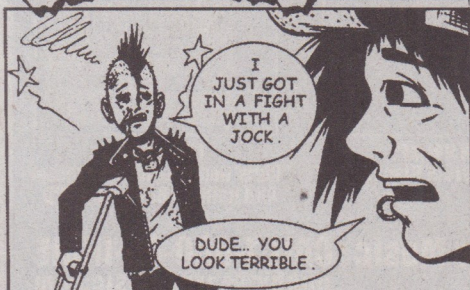
But in the end, it's the College that needs to be addressed the most. Most people can't even *name* their representative (fact), let alone vote for him or her. But the awesome responsibility of the chief executive and commander in chief makes it all the more imperative on a global scale that the principal of one-person-one-vote that decides Senate and House races (though it's only really used in the Senate races) be instituted for the Presidency, now and forever. Or at the very least, that the fundamental equality principal should be approximated instead of thwarted so grotesquely at every turn.

I'll leave you with this new, ironic scenario that I envisioned— and given how close the Ohio vote turned out to be, it came pretty damn close to happening in 2004: Maybe the best thing would have been for Kerry to have lost the 2004 popular vote and won the College this time. The whole funhouse mirror world as we've known it since December 2000 would have then been thrown 180 in reverse. Seriously, it would take something that drastic and delicious to finally make everyone see what has always been as plain as day to intelligent freedom lovers, since Franklin and **Thomas Paine** championed the people's competence over that of kings and unrepresentative governments. Bush supporters would have had to feel the sting of how the other half has lived, and all it's swallowed for four nightmarish years and now will for another four. (And truly it would have been their just comeuppance, since the president has governed as the most radically conservative president ever, as if he won a landslide of Nixonian 1972 proportions instead of stealing it by Court fiat and Electoral ignominy, and now will just ratchet up that several more levels even though his 2004 "mandate" remained extremely slim. Thought I, "Let them endure a Kerry presidency after Bush got more votes! See how they like it!") And though that did not happen, since it nearly happened twice in a row, who's to say it won't happen in 2008, when no incumbent will be running with the power of the presidency behind him and the field is possibly more leveled for a Democratic candidate who can appeal more to evangelicals—particularly if, as I forecast, our nation's economy and foreign policy are shown to be even worse than they are right now?

One bets that, were that to happen, the 28th Amendment would finally take shape on the horizon, at long, long last. Then we would sing with Dorothy, the Munchkins, and the flying monkeys, as we skipped happily to the polls on a *real* election day: "Ding dong, the witch is dead." ☞

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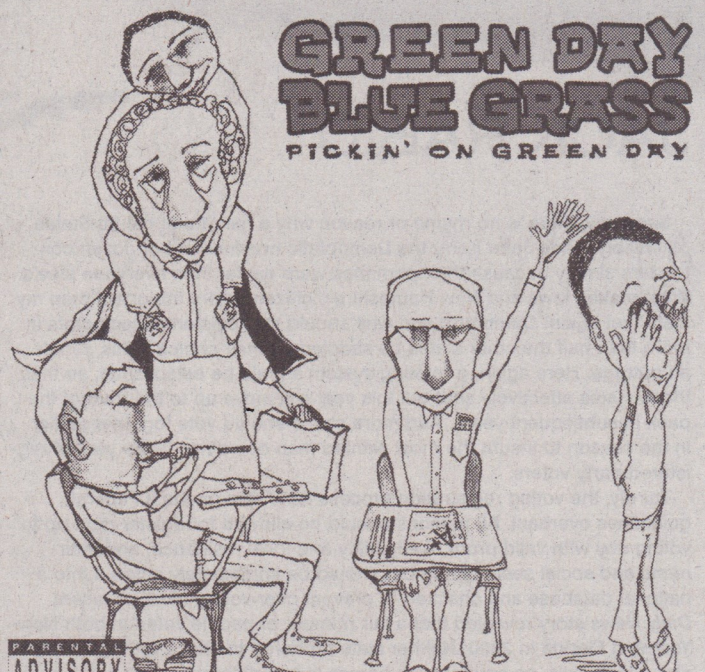


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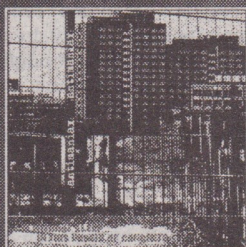
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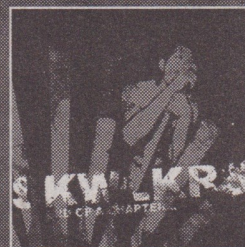
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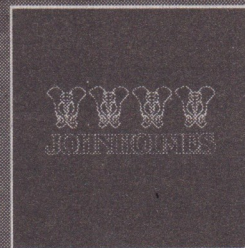
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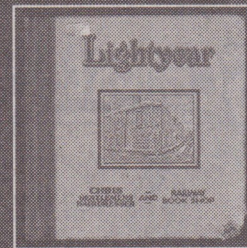
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THE TRAVOLTAS



By Jasper van den Dobbelsteen / Photography By Paul Bergen

In November 2004 Travoltas celebrated their 14th anniversary. A lot has happened in those years. Band members came and went, Travoltas did hundreds of gigs all over the world, played in front of 5 to 50.000 people. Sometimes things went smoothly, sometimes times were hard. At least there was one constant: these Dutch guys love to sing about The American Way of Life. With singer Perry we talk about the fascination for America, life on the road and the future.

As early as the very first Travoltas album you sing about American topics. At that time you'd never been to the USA. Where does this fascination about America come from?

Perry: "First of all, we're influenced by American music, the Beach Boys particularly. I can't speak for the others - I grew up with high school movies. I hardly watched anything else. I was kind of possessed. That lifestyle: surfing, surf movies, movies like Back To The Future, The Breakfast Club. American Teen-life appealed to me enormously. This has its influence on our music of course."

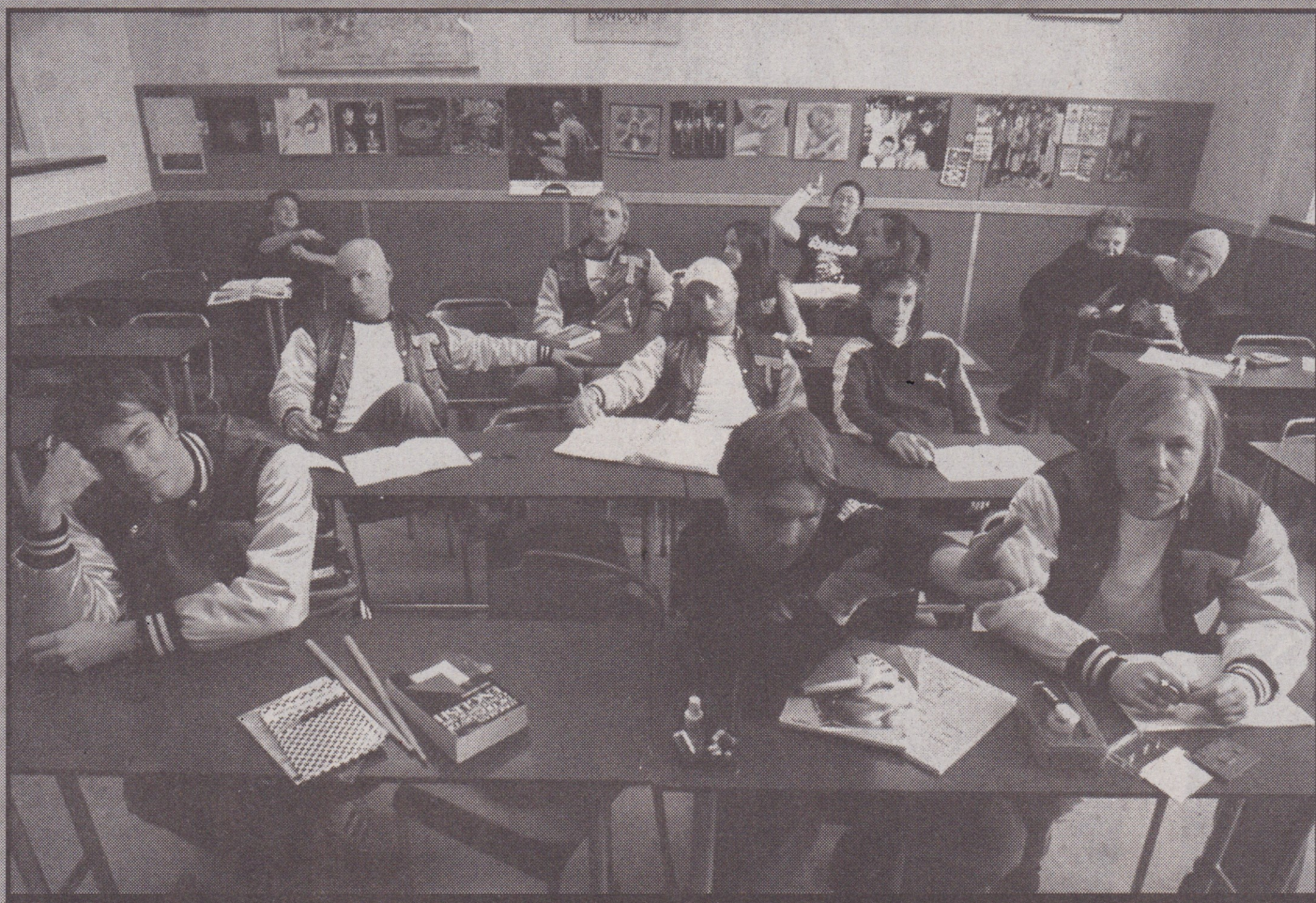
You lived in America for a while and have done a major tour in more or less all of the states. Is the American Way Of Life still appealing after such experiences?

"I think I idealized it for a long time. It's okay when you're a teenager, but while living there, you find out that real life is different from your dreams, of course. Well, California has its beach life, the rock'n roll lifestyle, the surf lifestyle. But on the other hand, everything comes down to: money. I don't know if it has been this way ever since the sixties, but today, when you don't have any money,

you're nothing in Southern California. That was a big disappointment. You only get to know real life when you actually live there. I'd been in America before, but only for work and vacation. Then you don't really realize it, because you don't have a social-life, but the moment you have to pay bills, things change. Americans have a different mentality then Europeans altogether. Now I have a pretty good idea that Southern California is extreme and that the East Coast is less superficial. It's a contradiction: on the one hand, I still love it, on the other hand, it's different from what I had expected".

The Club Nouveau album, which was never released in the US, contains lyrics that are pretty critical about life in America. The album doesn't proclaim happiness. Is that what you meant earlier when it comes to criticism on America's superficiality?

"Well, no. Not just America. Also in Europe you can see that people start to



care more about looks, about the outside. Turn on the TV and you'll see what I mean. All looks, no brains. I don't want to sound like your old man; I also watch commercial television, but it seems that it is getting worse. It's all a bunch of crap."

What about those high school movies, they're all about looks, right?

"There is a big difference between American Pie and The Breakfast Club for example. Just look at the development of the characters. In American Pie there is no real character development. In Part I they finish high school, in Part II they go to college, and in Part III they get married. But actually it's nothing more than lavatorial humor, a 2003 version of Porky's. The Breakfast Club is much more profound, it's characters develop. You won't hear me say the same thing about Back To The Future, but you will hear me say that about Sixteen Candles and Pretty in Pink, say all John Hughes films. They're more personal, they make you laugh, of course, but you also felt connected to the characters. The youngsters had the same problems you had. Now it's all about laughing and fucking. Oh well, that's not bad either, is it?"

Since the lyrics get more serious, does it have anything to do with your development as a lyricist?

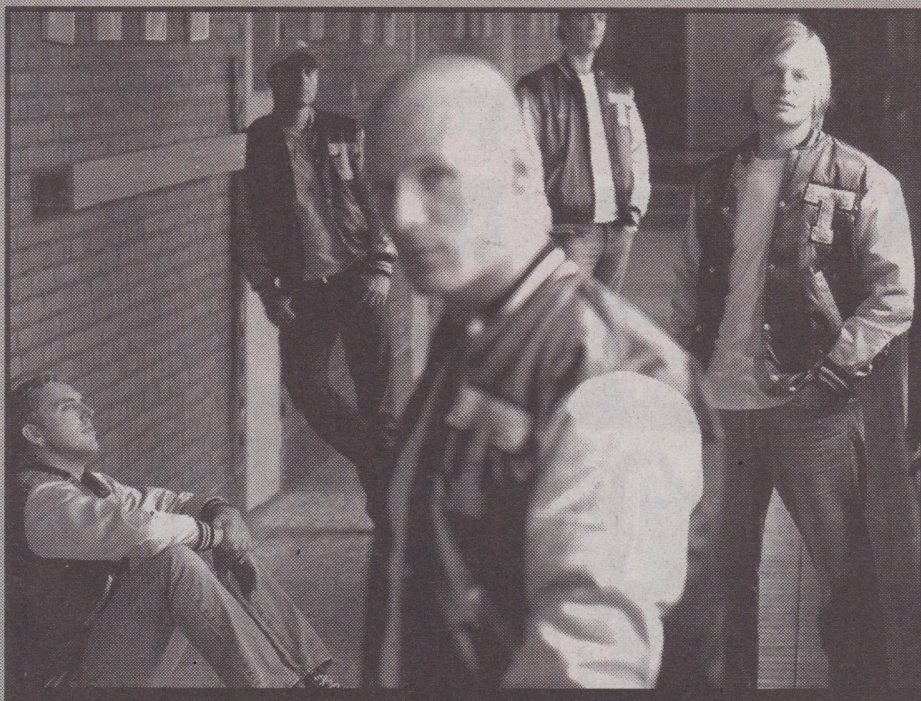
"I don't regard to be a gifted lyricist, but I do develop myself of course. You live through things, learn how to put things in perspective. When you keep your eyes and ears wide open, you'll easily discover that The American Dream mostly consists of thin air. Well, in the period we recorded Kill Kill Kill and Baja, California we were in our late teens and early twenties. We were still in school, had an easy life, had nothing to do with anybody. When you finish school, you have to step into real life. Well, alright, when you're in a band you'll never really get into real life, but everybody else around you is. We see a lot of people who totally adapt to what society expects from them. I'm glad that I can still keep my distance from this kind of life. I also sing about this. I'm not willing to give in. But I don't really pay much attention to my lyrics. I mostly do have an idea about what the song should be about, even when the songs sounds happy. Like the title track of the album we're working on, The High School Reunion. It sounds happy, but it doesn't deal about a bunch of people that meet after a long period of time and have fun and laugh their asses off. It's about the opposite really, about dreams that didn't come true. Everybody expected something from life, a Golden Future, but it all went quite differently than expected. It's important to me to sing about things like that."

Are Travoltas getting older and more serious?

"I'm not the only one singing about different topics, of course. Take Bruce Springsteen, I don't want to compare myself with him, but he's got songs with a very serious, sometimes sad mood and then, in the next song, he can sing about going to a bar to play pool and drink lots of beer just as easily. I think it's good to capture different kinds of moods on one album. I don't dig an album with just one mood. An album should be dynamic, with different vibes on it."

Travoltas have done an enormous number of gigs all over the world. Where do you like to play best?

"Still, I think in America. Not so much for the venues, because as a not-too-famous Dutch band, you mean next to nothing. You know this from the start, but in America you can really convince people. In The Netherlands people are much more sober. In The Netherlands you can't say your band is great and that you're very ambitious. In America, on the other hand, it's good to be ambitious. We did some shitty gigs in America, but also some very good ones. Then you start to notice - also more or less in Italy and Germany - that in some way it has an impact on people. People are willing to become fans. In The Netherlands that's more difficult. In America people are more open-minded. People are



more passionate about something. When they think something's cool, they really go for it. You get more appreciation, also among bands. I really think we've gained a bit more respect in the punk rock scene since the tour. You're all in it together. I think we'll be coming back to America early 2005. Before that time, we'll tour Europe".

All over the world Travoltas are doing fairly well. But there's no country where they are as big as in The Netherlands, but within the punk rock scene Travoltas are a household name. Do you expect Travoltas to be really big some day?

"Well, that's what ambition is about, but reality is different. I have no idea how you can become a large band without all the media backing you up. You got to have a good video, a good image, got to know the right people who also believe in you. And now I'm just talking about The Netherlands. Abroad it is all the more difficult, let alone in America! It just impossible for us to tour the US non-stop, otherwise we'd certainly do so. But we're not with Universal Records America who invests a couple of million bucks in our videos and tours and all. That's reality. You can either get pretty depressed or keep on doing what you're doing. In our case that's making records and doing as many tours as we can and building up a fan base piece by piece. I'd rather be in a band that has become legendary in the punk rock scene than be in a band that has one big hit and disappears out of sight forever. There've been numerous times that we didn't think it would work anymore. The Club Nouveau album was a special project, but didn't seem to catch on. Nobody really wanted to go on at that time. We thought about quitting. But we didn't. On top of all that Eric left the band. We

recorded *Endless Summer* and went to America. The first couple of weeks we had a lot of set backs, but later on it all went better. Then we found out we had to change our way of thinking. It didn't occur to us that our negative thoughts also affected others."

Will Club Nouveau, which reflects The Travoltas in a gloomy period, still be released in America?

"I don't know. I think it's one of our best albums. There are a lot of people who like many different genres of music, and they will certainly think Club Nouveau is a cool album. But right now, we're busy to present ourselves in a certain way. When someone who has never heard of us before, buys Club Nouveau after seeing a Travoltas show, he'll be surprised when he plays the album at home. Club Nouveau has songs on it that don't have anything to do with punk rock. It's an album that you should listen to when you know The Travoltas for a while already, I think you'll appreciate it and understand it a lot more than when it would be your first Travoltas record."

After the release of *Endless Summer* and a tour of a couple of hundred shows, you guys announced a sabbatical in 2003. But that didn't really work. Are the Travoltas work-a-holics?

"Yes, the sabbatical has largely failed, but we did have the period of rest we needed so badly. We could tour England, but the circumstances were thus, that if we did it, we would have broken up. We were totally wasted, in seven months we did 150 shows in Europe and America. We were always tired. So in 2003 we only did a tour in Italy. At first Vince wouldn't go, because he didn't want to have anything to do with the band for a couple of months, it

was driving him mad. And at that time Eric returned to join the band again, a positive impulse. This fresh wind was welcome. Right before the Italian tour Danny announced that he wanted to quit, then Vince came along anyway. This tour was very successful, but still, after a lot of talks, Vince announced he didn't want to go on. To top all that, I hadn't written a decent song in months. So we checked ourselves, like: where do we want to go and is there still a future for The Travoltas? We still believed there were plenty of opportunities, but first the time had come to take some rest and do some thinking. We took our time to do fan things. Things for which we'd normally couldn't find time. Last year we recorded a Party album. A very relaxed project, and Vince and I had some production work to do, like The Spades and Goldenboy. We got ourselves a new, great guitarist, Mickey and everybody is very positive and hungry at the moment. Vince will be our sound engineer. I think I won't miss him on stage, since I know he doesn't feel like playing anymore. We've done a lot of gigs, while I knew he didn't want to play *You Got What I Need* anymore for the one millionth time. I believe he has made a good decision by quitting. In this manner, it has been solved in a good way. I can't think of a better sound engineer for this band than him. No other engineer knows the songs as he does and he knows exactly which knob to turn when we're up on the stage. And Mickey fits in the band perfectly. He's been a good friend of ours for years and he plays a mean guitar. I think we haven't worked as hard as we do now. We have a lot of confidence in what the future will bring. Not that I expect to score a hit or something, but we do want to make our mark in the punk pop scene. Some time ago I heard the new album of one of the big guns in punk rock, I won't mention the name of the band, but what I heard really sucked! Not one good song on the album! Then I go: we're better. That band has been doing this for a long time now, but they only seem to get worse. We're still getting better."

You always produce your own albums. Have you ever thought about hiring someone who can keep distance?

"When I write a song I always know exactly how I want it to be, in the studio it's only a matter of performance. The demos I record at home all contain songs that are as good as finished. They don't need any extra production. All the arrangements are there when we go in to record it with the whole band. But I'd love to work with people like Rick Ocasek or Adam Schlesinger of *Fountains of Wayne*. That's the direction we'd like to go production-wise. I think they are masters in creating the American Sound, they have the right feel. It would be an honor to work with guys like that." ❧

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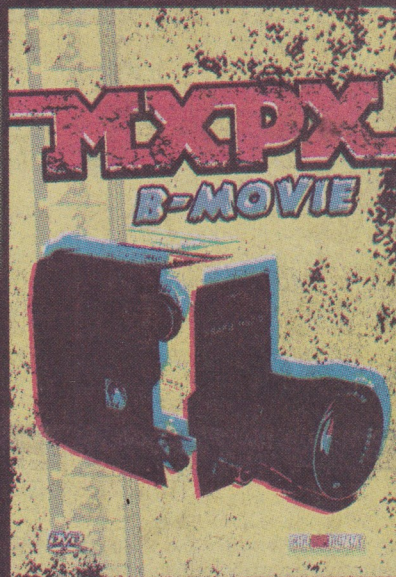
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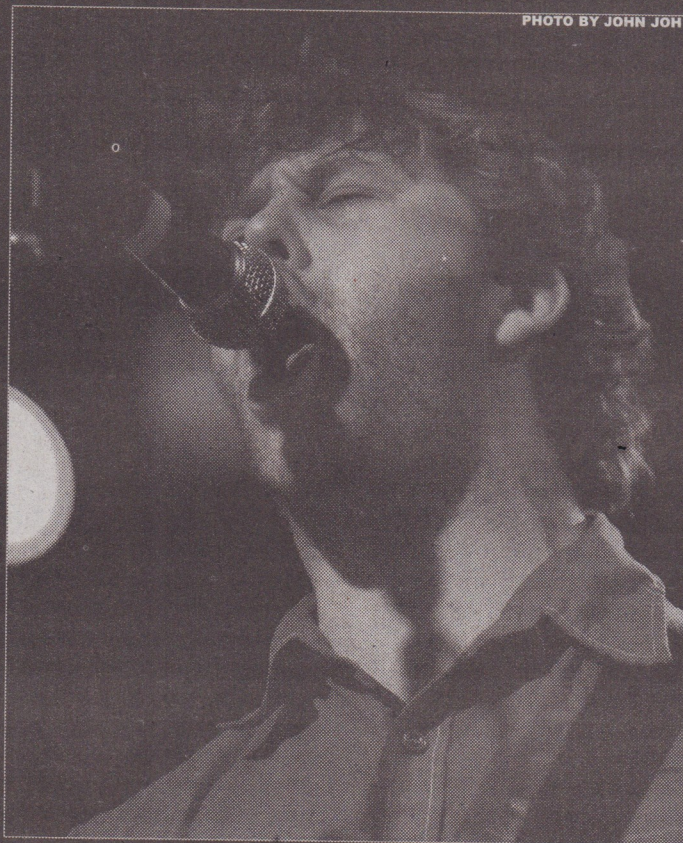


PHOTO BY JOHN JOH

By Christina White

The relationship I have with Hot Water Music as a whole and individually is much like the relationship I have with my brothers; teasing, fighting, laughing, mutual admiration, and trust. My love for this band makes it almost impossible for me to be unbiased while writing this article as it is so very easy for me to see the genius and beauty in their creation. As a journalist I will do my best to convey the story as it is, but my enthusiasm is such I fear that it will come through, but fear not for I believe it is genuine in nature and to be true and warranted. That disclaimer aside, let the 'total gayness' begin. I would find it difficult to discuss another group of men I have met in my life as honest and loving and true to their being as the four men in Hot Water Music. They are the kind of people you meet in your life, if you are so lucky, who make you want to be the best person you can, or as Chris Wollard always says, "be yourself to the point of embarrassment or what is the fucking point!"

In their 10th year as a band they find themselves for their third session at Salad Days studio in Beltsville Maryland with Producer Brian McTernan, comfortably south of the Mason-Dixon. Salad Days is set back from the road behind Brian's house, between the house and the studio is a small patio where the guys spend most of their time when they are not needed in the studio. A small rusting table and three chairs along with various outdoor accretments is their environment. Multiple ashtrays, empty beer cans, glasses with last nights san-

gria, and cell phones crowd the table at all times. While the band was at Salad Days the cicadas came to visit. They hatch every 17 years and it was biblical, everywhere these flying hard backed insects? Chris learned that if you hit them they scream- as it is this became a favorite past time. There was never a shortage of laughing in the studio this time around for HWM; they stated on more than one occasion that this was by far the easiest record they had ever made.

Chuck: Pre-production was awesome, it was just the 5 of us and

we were just trashing the songs, just left and right trimming fat, moving stuff around, throwing stuff away and it was insane, but at the end of the day or the next morning we were like, "what did we do, what did we write, what's the name of that song, what am I playing?" It completely changed, then you learn how to play it, then you really learn how to play it, then you let yourself go and just do it! **Jason:** This record is my most proud moment; somehow I lucked out and got to write a lot of the fucking music on this one. We

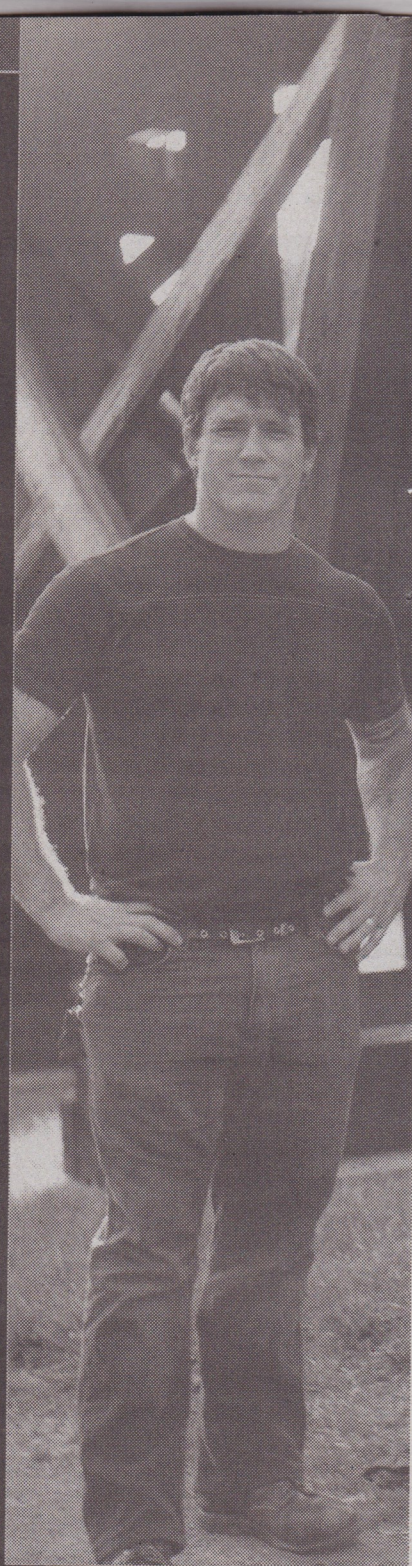


PHOTO BY CHRISSY PIPER



the part how are we going to make it happen" and everybody trusted everybody else's perspective on it. Only one, two arguments maybe.

Jason: Who ever came up with the bass riff- no problem I'll play it, and if I came up with a riff and showed it to Wollard he was like, "no problem man I'll play it." A couple of the songs Chuck wrote, he just wrote 'em, emailed 'em to us and we were like 'cool' and we just played 'em.

George: It was really easy. Just like this recording process has been easy, the same, it's weird. I'm waiting for something to happen, waiting for the worst and it's not. The worst thing that has happened is the fuse. Big deal they gotta go down the street and hunt down a fuse. Big deal.

Jason: It's not just another record, it's not like another chapter in the book; it's like a whole new fuckin' book. New volume, like that old shit is gone and it's cool and we still dig it. We're still gonna play it and whatever, but it's kinda like Anchors for the (Bouncing) Souls. This is a new deal now. There is stuff we're never gonna write again cos we've found an entirely different area of music in which we can play now, which is fuckin' cool.

Chuck: It's been so fucking awesome, each one of us has been totally willing to like move their part around or adjust it for the well being of the song, rather than like "NO my part!" Let's just make it work.

Jason: This is the first record by us that if I heard it and I didn't know it was us I'd go buy.

George: For me I guess the most satisfying thing is what we were talking about. There is no argument, there is no ego. Everybody is focused and wants the same thing, a good record. Which means good songs and not all of them sound the same. There's different feels, different set ups to it, different atmosphere. It's a complete thought from start to finish. You know... you go through all sorts of ya know... I've had some sangria but you know.. You go through every bit of emotion that you would go through. Fuckin' angst, pissed off fuckin' straight forward fuckin' like confusing quiet so many dynamics and diverse. It sounds amazing.

Chris: And were still layering hahahahaha.. (evil laugh)

George: Yeah man it sounds great, I can't wait till we auto-tune those guitars and then we make it sound better! (This is a joke kids!)

Chris: I can't wait till we put in those drum loops that we were writing for it.

George: It's gonna be so good! When we get some real musicians in here it's gonna sound GREAT!

Brian: Yeah we'll get Matt Squire in here to reply all of George's

'all write music, but a lot of the riffs I wrote turned into songs and it's cool. I'm stoked, 'cause it's totally different than anything else we've done and I didn't know if it was going to work, but this totally fucking did for some reason.

You told me this record is going to be "sick" and the kids are going to fucking hate you for it.

George: That's a good sign.

Jason: Yeah. The kids might hate us. The people should like it, (George breaks into FUCK THE KIDS FUCK THE KIDS)

George: I figured out where a triplet fits into the measure. We have a song that is kinda U2-ie. Brian and I were working together with it and, this isn't interesting to anyone but me, but in my head it clicked in and all the sudden I got a whole other perspective on playing (kinda like solving the rubics cube?) Ahhhh man, I got so much other shit now. This record sounds like a good combination of Fuel for the Hate Game meets Caution. It's good. It's the song writing of Caution with the fuckin' angst of Fuel for the Hate Game.

Jason: I still think its way harder than either one of those records.

George: It's more riffage- not as singer/songwriter as Caution was.

Jason: It just not 12 mid-tempo rock songs, as far as the vibe and the tempos, it's all over the place.

George: Which was a conscious thing, we tried to do that, like when you would write a riff we'd say, we have a song like that already and then we'd kinda fuck with it. It's the first record where none of us argued in practice.

Jason: Yeah.

George: We were like, "ok this is

drums.

George: I hate you Brian McTernan, I'm getting on friendster and I'm talking shit about you tonight!

Jason: By the time you typed a sentence you'd pass out!

George: No

Chuck: This is the most relaxed I've ever been in the studio. It's just been nice to come so prepared for one. We've never been so prepared. We still have a lot of work to do but for the most part the structure was there and a huge aspect is that we've worked with Brian twice now. We know each other's ins and outs, we've tested the limits, we've been at each others throats already. We know what buttons are there to push if we need to, or not. That makes a huge deal with coming and doing any kind of project this intense. What we do here is so important. When we are done here and it's laid down on tape in stone, that will define our time here right now. That's why you gotta do it right, it's that important. Totally the coolest experience I've ever had in the studio.

Tell me about Brian

Chuck: First time I met Brian was in Rhode Island at a festival that we played. We drove from Gainesville up to Rhode Island to play this festival that, besides the bands, I think there was maybe 15 people! It was pretty amazing, we met up with some friends from Gainesville up there and Brian's band Ashes played, I had some of their 7"s I was a fan, I loved the band. Brian says he was kinda freaked out and scared of us back then, he says we were kinda wild! We were wild that day, we were on vacation, it was hot and we felt like drinkin whiskey and breaking windows. That was what we had to do that day. When we got tired of playing kickball in the parking lot we started breaking windows and that made all the sense in the world! I never really truly got to know him until that first session we did with him for Flight which was hard in all kinds of ways. Right away he and George, and you know George is the first thing that goes down, that's our boy, our foundation, the structure that we have to build on and if that's not solid then we are in trouble. Right away George and Brian were toe to toe and it was not pretty. George could not stand Brian. When it comes down to it, that Flight session, I don't think Brian McTernan was ready for Hot Water Music and I don't think we were ready for him, ya know?

George: Shit I don't know where to begin...I spent about seven years making albums and everyone told me I was great and Brian, first album when we came in and all he did was point out my bad qualities when nobody else had the balls to do it. So he rubbed

me wrong right away cos most people were just suckin' my dick. He was the first guy who didn't say, "oh that's great!" He told me "that sucks." He is not attached to individual parts, he's attached to the over all sound of the song and he makes me aware of that.

Chuck: I have so much respect for Brian. He's got an incredible ear and great ideas. He nails it. There is not a lot that he does that I don't like. I just wasn't use to it and I wasn't expecting it. After awhile of getting to know him as a producer and an engineer as someone who knows his shit and knows his tools better than anyone we've ever worked with is he's just got this ability and for some reason it just works great with us. He just really pushes us. He helps us find...he has an outside perspective that normally we wouldn't have found or figured out. It's made us better players, it's brought us closer as a band and it's helped us evolve in so many ways as musicians and as a band.

George: Even if he doesn't have the answer he will still point it out. I think he has a great ear and is an amazing talent. This has been the easiest record we've ever made and when we were doing drums everyone just kinda stayed away and Brian and I worked it out. My whole attitude about it is setting up, making an atmosphere happen for a verse then setting it up to drop the bomb. And Brian knows this. It's nice to have someone who actually gives a shit; it makes us play it better. Given the ease of recording in general the snags and hurdles they did have to overcome seemed more assets than liabilities. One night like any other night in Beltsville on the verge of a summer thunderstorm Brian comes busting out of the studio onto the patio, where I sat with Jason and George discussing their beginnings, and exclaimed loudly "Wollard is a rock monster!" Chris, quick on Brian's heels comes charging through the studio door growling at the top of his lungs, "I AM A ROCK MONSTER!" Earlier that day Chris had been having trouble getting his amp to withstand the rock monsterness of his riffage, blowing fuses repeatedly. He and Brian had gone on a field trip to DC to search for fuses, special fuses for a special amp- the mighty Harry Joyce, and they came back with two. Wollard expressed not only excitement but frustration over the situation, "man I've got one fuse left and one minute worth of song left to play! We made it through the bridge and everything, then it died right at the end of the bridge, and we were like FUCK! I have to finish the song or we have to start all over, and it's got a perfect delay sound." (Making sure we understand the gravity of the situation.) The next day the song is finished,

after hearing the unique guitar tone and the true monstrosity of the song itself, it brought home the frustration Brian and Chris had been dealing with. If that last fuse would have blown the entire song would have needed to be re-tracked, bummer...but they did it! Hot Water's rhythm section has been hailed as the tightest in punk rock, George and Jason share a single brain on stage (and off stage too it seems from listening to them talk.) These two guys have been friends for over 15 years. They are the glue that keeps this band together. Much like an old married couple they interrupt each other and finish each other's sentences, trying to dissect the conversation was almost impossible so I'll let you do it for yourself...

How did they come together how did they become Friends?

Jason: I remember in high school we hated each other cos he was a metal head and I was straight-edge.

George: Till we started sleeping at each other's houses cos we were making out with the same chicks. You were confused, you didn't know if wanted green hair or long hair.

Jason: I just wanted boobs! So things haven't changed much? **Jason:** No we're pretty much exactly like we have been for the past 15 years! That's pretty much it. We were in jazz band together and he was good and I was good and we liked each other.

What Music did you bond over?
George: John Coltrane.





PHOTO BY JOHN JOH

Jason: Yeah, jazz pretty much.

George: Until I figured out that he liked metal.

Jason: I was a recovering metal head, 9th grade was metal year for me, and he met me in 10th.

George: Jason was the first guy who introduced me to Fugazi.

Jason: I showed George punk rock that wasn't fuckin' Minor Threat or the Misfits.

George: I personally hated all that shit, I liked Dag Nasty and I toured with Brian Baker, probably half way through that Bad Religion tour was the first time I went up to Brian Baker and I was like, 'I'm gonna suck your dick once and that's it! You were the only one I thought was any good at punk rock!' I was a nerd, listening in headphones analyzing air drums.

Jason: Stereo pan guitar solos!

George: I was a nerd about music and I couldn't understand what the hoopla was about punk rock, cos I never paid attention to lyrics and it's too easy for me. I didn't really care, like most people when they first start playing punk rock it's cos they are really politically driven or the other side is 'oh I can play that right now' and they start to learn the guitar parts. Fugazi was the first band Jason showed me where I was like wow this doesn't suck, musically it's pretty good. Jason said well check out Minor Threat then, same dudes' man! I was like this is bad, this is bad, good movement whatever!

Jason: He just BIG DEALD Minor Threat! Intense!

George: I can't help it. Whatever big deal. Dag Nasty great guitar player, I knew Brian Baker had a



PHOTO BY CHRISBY PIPER

little nerd in him.

Jason: Or a lot of nerd in him!

George: And raw talent, but if I threw a millidium mode fuckin' whatever yada yada scale at him, he'd know what the fuck I'm doin' cos he is a nerd.

Tell me about your first instruments and how you knew you wanted to play.

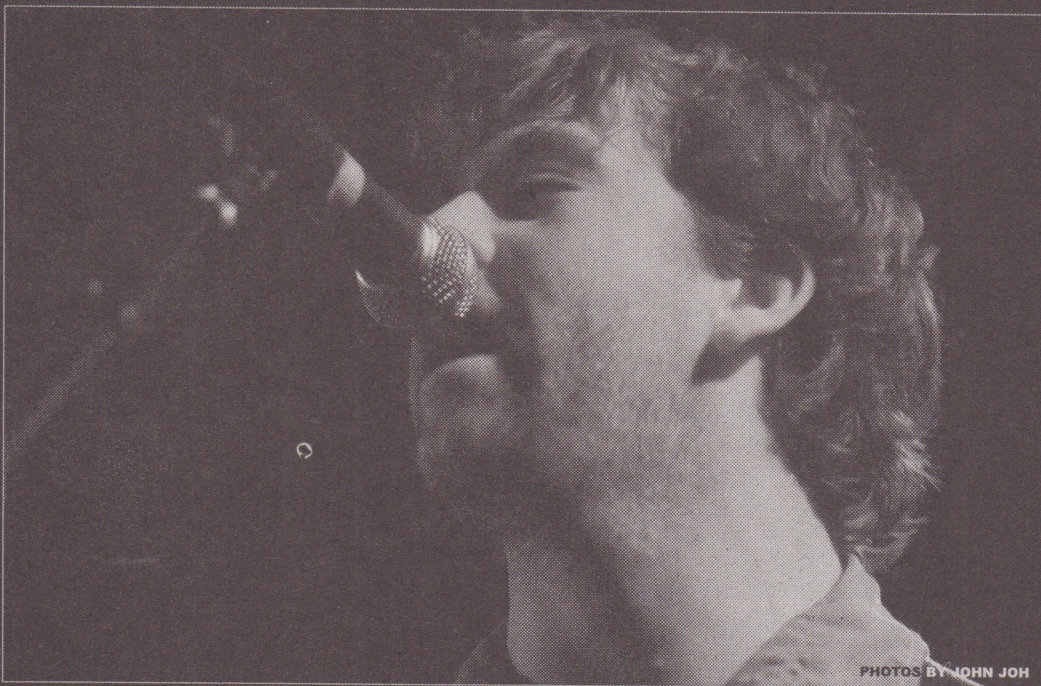
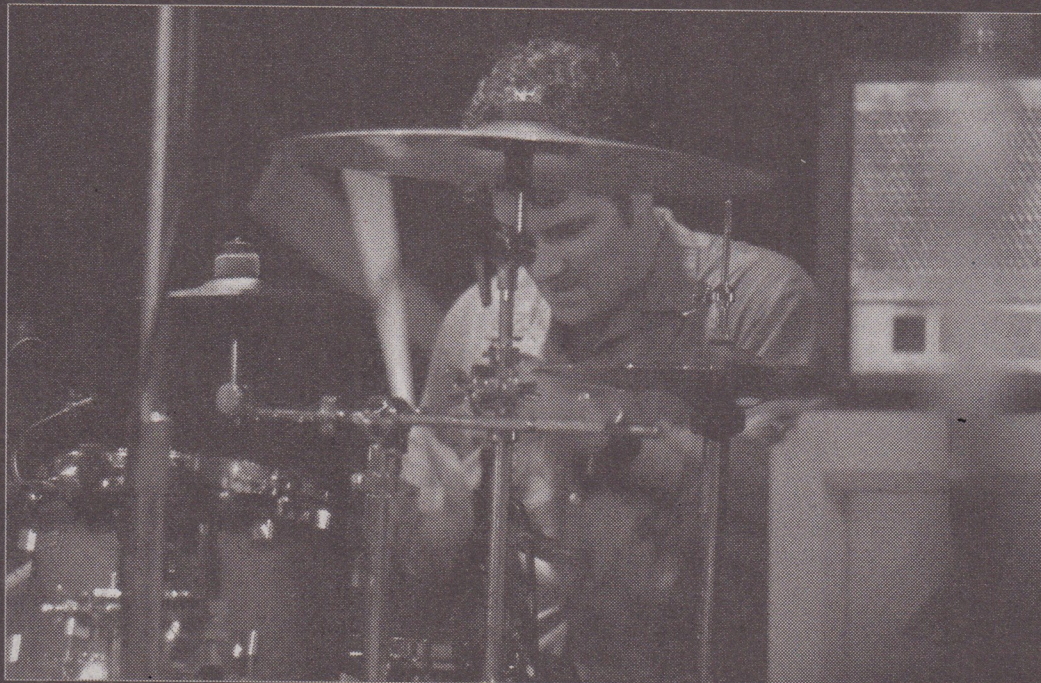
George: Since I was I was 5 I wanted to play drums. I got a little Muppet drum set on my birthday and it had paper heads on it and I played it for about 20 minutes and broke it and I was hooked and nothing has changed since. I asked for a drum set on every Christmas and every birthday for the next 7 or 8 years and I was the kid that if I asked for something I got it. I would use it for about 10 minutes and then it would sit in my closet and collect dust. My parents didn't buy me a thousand dollar drum set right away figuring it would just collect dust and, they didn't want to hear it all day long even if I did like it. After 7 or 8 years of convincing my parents they were like, "you're just not going to stop asking about drum sets" so they bought me one.

Would you make drum sets out of other things?

George: My grandmother actually made drum sets for me, she would take coat hangers with the cardboard cylinders and break those off for the drumsticks, with boxes and buckets. A bucket for the snare and a box kick drum, no pedal, just there for visual purposes. So I pretended like I had one and then other boxes placed like a drum kit and then she would tack up shoestrings from the ceiling and hang lids from pots and pans for the cymbals so I would sit there all day long. I can imagine it was so fucking annoying but I would sit there all day long, some kid bashing away on pots and pans and boxes and buckets and shit.

Was grandma hard of hearing?

George: Grandma was one of the most loving people you've ever met. Jason's first instruments were strings in the orchestra. He says "fat cables, I played the upright bass for like a year. My Dad use to play the drums till I was like 6 when we moved to Florida so I would go down in the basement and watch him jam out all the time. Then in middle school we had a rotating art class and



PHOTOS BY JOHN JOH

orchestra was one of them. I just picked bass cos nobody else wanted to play it. I think I was like 8th grade when I was reading the liner notes to Poison's "Look What The Cat Dragged In" and it said 'Bobby Dahl- Bass' and I was like fuck I play bass! Then I finally discovered what that third guitar in all those metal bands was and I was like OH COOL I can play that! So my grandma bought me a bass and that was that." Big props to the grandmothers of Hot Water Music!! Jason continues, "Poison is the reason I play bass!" Jason and George started playing together in bands when they were about 15 and George says, "Basically he was in every one of

my metal bands and I was in every one of his punk rock bands." So if there is any question as to why the rhythm section of Hot Water Music is so tight go back to high school become friends with a bass player if you are a drummer and play together almost every day for 15 years then see where you're at. Jason says, "We don't function very well playing with other people." George said it really came down to, "oh you're cool, you like boobs? Yeah? Cool, let's hang." Jason and George were in a couple bands kickin' around Sarasota for a couple years, ranging from Fishbone sounding bands that would have fast verse then break down into

Coltrane sounding randomly. Fossil with Chuck and George, George wrote everything... Jason says, "we met Chuck, he was working at the Subway next to the frozen yogurt place George and I worked at so we would trade yogurt for sandwiches. Chuck loved strawberry vanilla milkshakes. George says, "I would make him a huge strawberry vanilla milkshake and he would make me a Philly cheese steak!" Jason says, "We were such bad little kids!"

George: Then both of us would steal from the register and go up to this music store called Boogie Woogies and buy used CDs.

Jason: Work at the yogurt shop,

take money, and just go buy CDs! **George:** Like full on just rob this place.. like figured out a way where if I don't ring it up they don't know it came through the register! Alright! That'll be two dollars please!

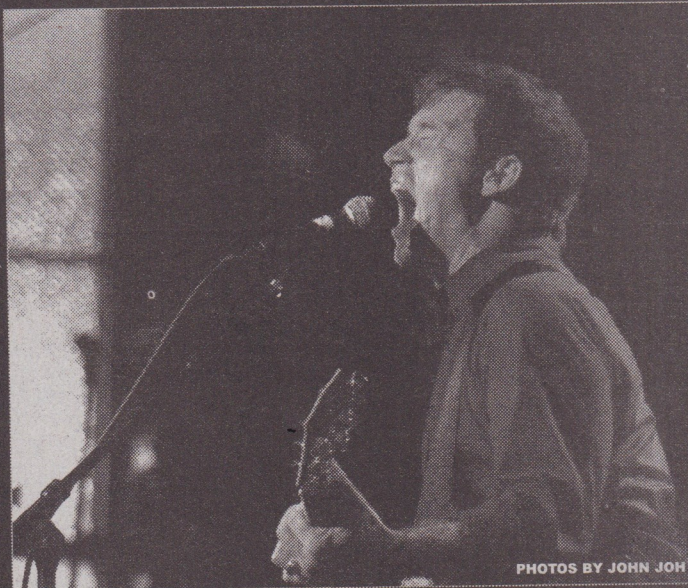
Jason: We had those days where we rung in \$35.00 to the yogurt shop for a six hour shift or something but it was really busy!

How did you meet Wollard?

Jason: Wollard, was an interesting character...I started playing with this guy in Gainesville who was from Sarasota when I was going to college and he was from the... kinda like the good straightedge hardcore band from Sarasota and me and him were jammin in Gainesville for a little while my freshman year of college. It was like getting more along the lines of what I wanted to play finally and I was like, 'alright cool this guy's is kinda into the same stuff I'm into.' We both went back to Sarasota for the summer and he knew Wollard, and I had known Wollard a little bit from my friend Dave who sang for that band Assuck for a little while. Him and Wollard were bros from the straightedge scene. Wollard use to be this vicious straightedge kid who actually, like, enacted violence upon drunks and stuff like that. The bass player for Fossil was out of town for the summer so I was fill-in' in with George and Chuck again and then me and George and Zach were playing a little bit and Zach was like, 'I know this guy Chris I've been trying to start a band with for long time, let's give him a call.' So that was the beginning of the end of that part of my life.

George: Yeah Jason fuckin' brings me to practice with him for the first time and I see this fuckin' guy with a beard down to his chest and, like, shaved head. (Argument over Wollard's hair ensues. They agree that Wollard had long hair for their first couple shows and George concedes.) I just remember seeing him and going, 'you gotta be kidding me I'm going to be in a band with this guy!?!' Oh this sucks! Who is this guy?? He was really quiet and straightedge and fuckin' like vegan. He was really quiet and it kinda freaked me out, but then we started playing and I was like eh, he can play! **Jason:** Who's the bookworm over in the corner? And he was straightedge, kind of. When we started playing he had started sneaking the occasional beer. And when he started singing I thought 'wow he can sing!'

Chuck: It was one of those things where the first time you met 'em you couldn't stand 'em but then later they end of being one of your best friends, those become your life long friends and that's what it was. With Jason and George we're playing with this tall lanky



PHOTOS BY JOHN JOH

bag of wind, Chris Wollard and all I'd known of him is he was a great guitar player and super intense crazy guy. He was some big vegan straightedge warrior who all the little straightedge kids looked up to and would go and ask him questions 'how do I stay strong?' and he would guide them. That is what I knew of Chris. One of the first times I ever met him he came over with a couple of his friends to me and George and Kevin's place you know, and he was WASTED! I was like, 'wait a second I thought you were *this* guy?!' Just like the rest of us we were all growing up and finding our ins and outs and what makes us tick. Right off the bat, right out of the gate I thought he was completely obnoxious but I really liked him at the same time, I thought 'man that guy is an asshole but he's really cool!'

How did you meet George?

Chris: You know that we use to be two bands? It was me and Jason's band, Thread, and George and Chuck's band, Fossil. We needed a drummer and we tried out all these drummers and nothing worked and we must've tried out everyone who played drums in both towns (Gainesville and Sarasota) and nothing was working out. Jason kept going on about this drummer he played with and I remember I didn't know Jason that well and I know I didn't take it very seriously. I was kinda bouncing ideas off the other guy and didn't know what to do so finally one day Jason was just like, 'listen, dude is good lets just jam with him!' So I remember I showed up and this was like the coattails of me being like straight-edge and vegan and George still has his fuckin' long ass down to his ass like metal fuckin' big like, big huge hair!

George: Total death metal, I'm from Florida!

Chris: And were in this strip of

warehouses that is known for just being dirt rock metal heads cos it's Tampa! I fuckin' rolled up to this dude and I was like GOD damn another metal head?! WHAT THE FUCK MAN! Cos he looked crazy!

George: SEE I said the same thing about Chris, you son of a bitch! No way!

Chris: We were just lookin at each other saying like oh man, this ain't gonna work!! But IT DID!! We started hanging out cos we were jamming well together right. Cos really he was in a metalish kinda band.

George: He was the exact opposite of everything I wanted to be and probably vice versa too.

Chris: Oh yeah! But what we were looking for we didn't really know. We didn't know what we wanted until we found it. We were just kids from beach towns and our band was like mega watered down Big Drill Car kinda stuff. Their band was pretty good but it was also in that time when I wouldn't call it grunge but that drop D, heavy, you know. They were good cos George was sitting in the back pounding his ass away! It was amazing, we would play a practice and we were stoked cos we played the best we could and it was good, good in a New Yorker kinda way, it was just good. But then you'd go see Fossil play and George would just go berserk and you'd be like, 'whoa what a drummer!! There was nobody else in the area, NOBODY that played like that! So we all moved up together. Even though we were two different bands it was still like the four of us, and me and Jason wanted to get a little heavier, but our singer was singing real pretty. It was good, but we kept having these tendencies to keep getting a little heavier. The pop is cool, but we see what George is doing every night and we're like FUCK I wanna

do that! George was just filling in when we started playing with him but the more we played with him the more we wanted him in the band. Let's make this more a band, lets let it evolve and the guy that was singing for our band was playing guitar too. He was pretty much the main songwriter for that band and we would come up with stuff but he wasn't too into it and didn't really hear where we were coming from... but we didn't know where we were coming from either.

George: What made the decision to go to Gainesville so easy for you? (This is where George took over the interview for a minute, thanks Georgie!)

Chris: I had been up there a shit ton of times writing with Zach and Shawn, and I was always going up to Spoke and Radon shows and the old Less Than Jake shows, Dig Dug shows and the first time I went to Gainesville we went to the Spoke house and it was like the first punk house I was ever in. It was the perfect picture of a punk house in my mind growing up, you know? When you were listening to Minor Threat and you were looking at that Salad Days 7" and you know I knew that living in a retirement community with my family is not what I want to be doing. THAT is what I want to be doing. And so I went to the Spoke house and everything was perfect, lunatics everywhere and art and instruments everywhere, every single room of the house was somebody else's bedroom and you had to go through peoples bedrooms to get to other peoples bedrooms ya know what I mean, just FUCKIN' AWESOME! I walked in and it was like I gotta move here! I'm going to Gainesville! I talked to my girlfriend and she was like, 'I'm going to Gainesville,' talked to my best friend and he said, 'I'm going to Gainesville!' I talked to George

and he said, "I'm going to Gainesville!" Fuck it, let's go!!

Jason: This was right before we started Hot Water. We had Thread and Fossil going on and George was pretty much in Thread with us and then Fossil's bass player would be back at the end of the summer, so I wasn't going to go to Miami for school cos it pretty much just sucks there, so there's that. I went to Gainesville and there were just flyers for shows everywhere and Spoke and Radon were from there and they were like the only bands that played in a town other than where they were from in Florida so I was just like, 'Oh I'll go there' cos that seems like a good place to start a band.

Chris: We were jamming so well together, god that is such a stupid word, but we were *jamming* so well together that we started hanging out and drinkin' and partying and at the end of the summer we knew Jason was going back to school and so we were like fuck it let's go. This group of two bands, Fossil and Thread, all moved up to Gainesville. All four of us were a complete mess, it was the first time we had moved away from our families and we were just a condensed group and we knew nobody and were just pushing the limits everyway that we could.

George: I remember thinking, 'I'm going to Gainesville' and two weeks later I was packing my car. We moved away from a place we were pretty much dialed into and it's hard to start again at ground zero.

Chris: We all went up there and all got apartments at the same spot where Jason was already living. We all lived within a hundred yards of each other and we would all go to the Hardback together and we were the only people we knew in town and after the show or the bar we would all go home

together and sit up all night listening to records and playing guitar and just feeling like this is what I want to do, no doubt about it! Everything we need is right here. Just keep writing," and we were writing all the time!

Chuck: George and I had already been talking about getting the hell out of Sarasota. Nothing was happening down there, for just some young kids who want to play it's just the absolute worst place to be. Jason already lived up in Gainesville so the most obvious solution was to go to Gainesville. I had a guitar I loved to play and I wanted to fuckin' play guitar! I kinda thought we'd all move up there with our bands, but then me and Chris would start a side project.

Chris: Yeah, I didn't know these guys for more than two months before I moved in with them. I had no idea who these guys were all I knew is we had a lot of fun playing and we all wanted to play. We all know that Gainesville is fun, awesome for bands especially for local bands. Let's go up there, get out of this beach town where it's all old people. We got up there and singer dude wasn't too into it and we were like, well this is what we want to do. That's why the first song we ever wrote was 'Us and Chuck' it was our band writing a song with Chuck. We were practicing one day in my apartment in the spare bedroom and Chuck was jamming...

George: ...no drum set, just me tapping on the floor...

Chris: ...and Chuck was jamming with us, our band, our half ass band not even really a band, adding another person and we just wrote it down on a piece of paper and showed it to the singer and he wasn't too into it and we were torn cos is this where we want to go? Yeah this is where we want to go and we were like well fuck it, Chuck can sing, well me and him can hold a tune, but it was supposed to be Chuck as a lead singer but then he kept writing guitar parts and I kept writing lyrics and that's how we became two guitar players and two singers.

Jason: Chuck was originally supposed to just sing but he would keep coming to practice and bringing his fucking guitar and amp and I was like, 'dude why are you, you are just supposed to sing' and to this day he still just keeps playing guitar!

Chuck: I don't know what happened!

Jason: And now he doesn't like singing anymore, he only wants to play guitar, he shoulda just told us that in the first place!

George: He tricked us!

Jason: He totally did! He budged us into letting him play guitar!

Jason: So that is how we started, totally by accident which is why I imagine why we don't blow.

Chris: Perfect way to start a band. It was totally utilitarian, we have a drummer, a bass player, and a couple of dudes who play guitar and kinda sing, let's start there. **Jason:** Three months after we started playing our buddy who ran the local record store said, "I think I'll put out a record for you guys, you don't sound like all the other bands in town." Which did not work out very well for us for a long time. We were totally the bastard stepchildren for that town for a long time.

George: But if it wasn't for Var and if it wasn't for Todd Hughes. We happened to meet the cool people in Gainesville who don't really give a shit, just like good music and can see through a bunch of bullshit. We met these people who had a label, had a record store, and we became really good friends and introduced us to the scene.

Jason: Well and we did stuff too, like go on tour! All the bands like Spoke and all those bands had been on like one tour, where we were like, 'WE'RE GOING ON TOUR!'

George: We got so much shit in the beginning cos we'd play like two or three times a month and we would get the bigger shows that came to town and other bands would give us shit.

At this point Jason and George both start talking at the same time and neither one will shut up...

Jason: When we got to open for Avail for the first time we got a lot of shit for that one man.

George: Everyone was like these new guys got to open for Avail, what the shit is that?! But also when we did a show we would go out and have a six-pack of beer in our backpack, take our bikes and go to Denny's and pass out thousands of flyers all over town for our show.

Jason: We wouldn't just go to the punk rock store and be like, if you wanna come that would be cool.

George: No, we would go and just plaster the kiosks in Gainesville, and put like 4 flyers on every telephone pole, the coffee shops, the pizza joints, where ever and just tell everybody we're playing and if you pass out a thousand flyers eventually...

Jason: ...50 people turn up!

George: That was a huge show back then!! People would say, "How'd you get that many people?" I don't know; just let people know about it!

Jason: Let it not be the cool kids' club for once and just let people know!

George: And we'd get shit for it, like, 'oh they're popular! Fuck those guys!'

Jason: They sound like Samiam, well COOL! We were sellouts for getting people to go to our shows, BIG DEAL!

George: Right off the bat we were

sellouts

Jason: Yeah, like signing to Epitaph was no big fuckin' deal at all cos we'd already dealt with it, I could sign to the biggest label in the world and not feel weird about it. Total Big Deal.

George: Right, BIG DEAL! We've all said it a million times; I think Jason started it, 'start your own fucking band!'

Jason: If you don't like my band, start your own!

George: Big deal, see what you can come up with, good luck to ya!

Jason: Tell me how many people come to your show! I won't fuckin' go! Yeah so that was that then we didn't put out a record for years, we put out a crappy singles collection everybody thinks is our first record.

George: And I'm still pissed about that, it wasn't intended to be a record. I remember everybody being scared shitless to talk to Var and I was the furthest removed from punk rock so I sat him down and was like, 'Dude look, will you put out a record for us, everybody else is kinda freakin' out about talking to you about it,' and Var was like, 'Yeah whatever' and that was it, done deal.

Chris: THAT'S RIGHT YOU'RE COOL!!

George: We had built it up in our heads like it was going to be this big weird thing trying to like, not sell it, but this weird...

Jason: ...We didn't want him to tell us we were bad.

George: Especially Jason and Chris loved Spoke and Radon and the Gainesville scene so much we didn't want to get turned down by the guy that made it happen. So I just went in and was like yo, put a record out and he's like 'yeah no problem,' no BIG DEAL!

Chris: It was a big deal then!

Jason: The first tour was just on the 7" in the summer and that is where you and I got stuck at that weird Australian stripper girl's house in Yonkers for like 4 fucking days eating vegemite and hiding from her-mom!

George: In my brain the Hardback was the cool fuckin' party and every time we walked in we were crashing the party, it was fucking cool man.

Chris: Eventually they got use to us crashing the party! We crashed the town! I remember the guy who put out our first demo, he heard that shit and was like, 'I don't really like it.'

George: Well everything else sounded like Screeching Weasel, which is fine but not for us.

Chris: We were a mess, so sloppy. I can understand how it would have been hard to like us back then.

George: We were stoked!

Chris: We were ecstatic, that is one of the reasons we are called Hot Water Music, we needed a name for our first Hardback show

and we were so fuckin' stoked, we were like "we got a show at the Hardback!" (high fives all around) WE NEED A NAME!! **George:** I think due to the fact that we didn't know anybody we could be friends with everybody! It didn't matter. We were here for the party, we were a band. We weren't tied onto anything but Hot Water Music.

What was your first show?

George: It was with Fried Christ and on the flyer they put Fried Christ HUGE!

Chris: Section 8 was printed pretty damn big and then Hot Water Music about as small as it could be and still be able to read it.

George: It was like copyrights size print, it was amazing.

Chris: Now it wasn't our first show it was our first Hardback show.

George: It was our first show in a scene.

Chris: Yeah, our first show.

George: Alan the guy who ran the place wanted to put us on a show for awhile, but someone in the scene had seen us and said 'oh fuck that band', but we told Alan we'd play any show and he knew we practiced 5 days a week.

Chris: They knew we would play any show that they needed a band for, and we did, we played two or three times a week at the Hardback, we played with everyone! We said, "WE WILL PLAY ANY FUCKIN SHOW, just let us play." Do you remember the first time we got paid more than a hundred dollars and we were all standing outside looking at the hundred dollars going 'oh my god!' and we must of been a band for a year or a year and a half before we ever got paid a hundred dollars.

George: We couldn't believe it!

Chris: This is counting demo tapes sold. We never made more than a hundred dollars. I remember walking out one time with like \$89.00 thinking we almost made a hundred dollars! I can also remember walking out of that place in North Carolina with \$4.00 and going 'THIS IS 4 DOLLARS! This asshole actually just paid us 4 dollars!' I would rather have you tell me to go fuck myself than hand me 4 dollars!

What did you do with the hundred bucks?

George: We probably bought pizza and beer; we didn't do anything good with it, until Jason took over.

Chris: We use to spend our money on tons of sheets of that shitty sticker sheet paper then cut stuff out of the local paper to make stickers with then spend hours at the copy place then spend all night walking around town just sticking stickers to everything! Back then we didn't have anything to do. We thought, 'ok we can walk around all night

smoking cigarettes, talking, and putting up stickers.'

George: We had a friend who worked at Kinko's and he would help us make thousands of flyers and stickers for free.

Chris: I taught everyone how to silkscreen, we'd use the silkscreen lab to make t-shirts. We'd sell the shirts cos we were living in these corporate apartments paying insane rent instead of moving into a house but we made it happen! Making it happen even in the direst of scenarios is a common theme for Hot Water Music. It is never a 'poor us' situation, look how hard we work, aren't we rad, or some fucking badge of "sceneiority" for them. It is more a very simple way of living and making the most of what life offers them, whatever it takes to play that next show is the bottom line.

Chris: My year anniversary of living in Gainesville was spent sleeping on the porch at George and Chuck's house, I was totally homeless for months and they had a couch on the porch so sometimes I would wake up there with the summer sun beating me on the face. If Chuck or George didn't come home I would sleep on one of their beds which were basically bunk beds or I'd sleep on the porch, or wander around somewhere to see who was still awake.

George: The whole goal for living like that and doing all of those things was to be able to go on tour and play and get paid 4 dollars. Every time we went on a tour we'd have to quit our shitty job and then when we came home we'd have to find another shitty job.

Chris: We didn't have enough money to record a lot of that 'Finding The Rhythms' stuff and I had this shitty metal guitar, the Jackson, something like what Korn plays or one of those cats, and we didn't have enough money to keep the recording going so I was like, 'alright I don't want this thing,' so we traded the guitar to the studio for studio time, whatever, we didn't care! The only thing that mattered was the local scene, with the exception of like Avail or Jawbreaker.. We're like were here, were broke, were doing our thing. No Idea has got our back by supporting every local band that can't afford to do shit, Rob and his studio is making it affordable for everyone to get a decent recording and through the years better and better recordings at the same fuckin' awesome price. And all of your friends totally were like 'hey man you need a place to stay; you can stay at my place I won't be home tonight.' I remember I was renting a storage place for six months and I spent Forty dollars a month on that instead of rent cos we were touring for the Summer, I didn't have

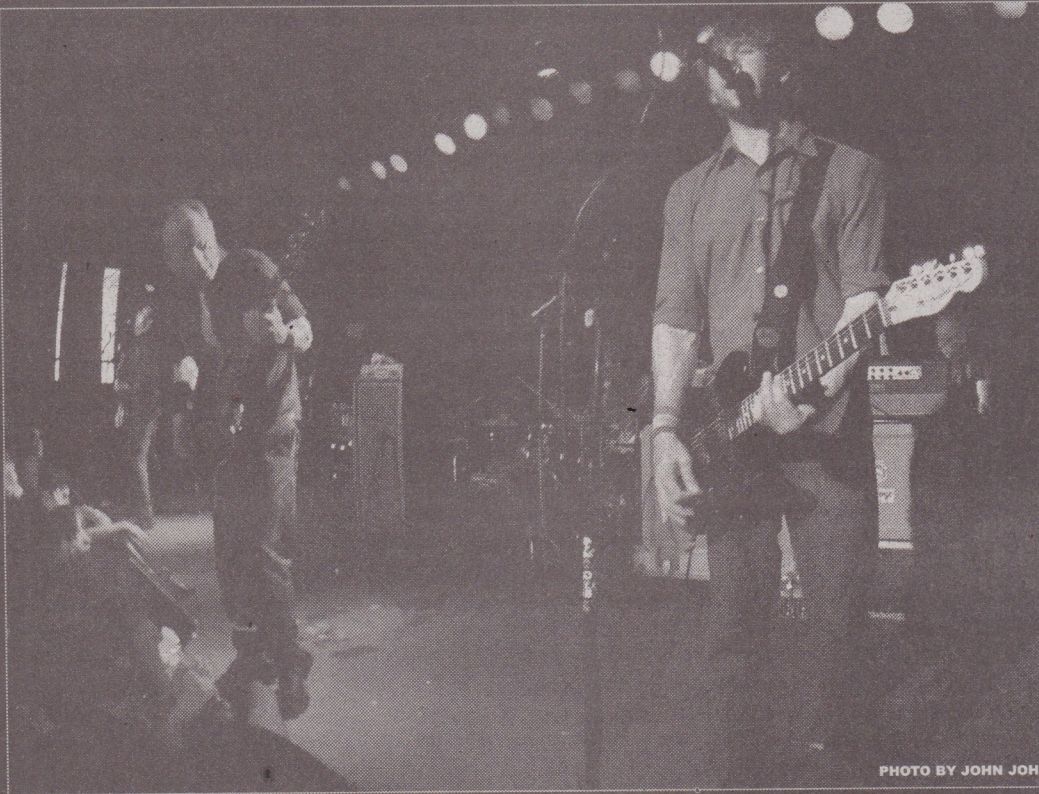


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any money and on tour we would all just kinda chip in and buy lame-o spaghetti and peanut butter and bread and we can live like that and when I come home I can just crash with my friends and every single one of our friends and us all worked in kitchens all around town so you would show up at whatever restaurant and get what you could for free. Hare Krishna lunch at the school, there were ways of making it! And it was awesome, totally awesome!!

George: Touring in an Astro van with five people and all of our equipment no trailer. It was Chris's van, and it's still a van that people use and tour in!

Chris: It's still the same thing today, we still live pay check to pay check, and 10 years later we'll still go to where our friends work and you might know the guy running the kitchen and so you get him to make you a burger and you know the girl who's the waitress and so she'll give you the employee discount on the beer your drinking, it's still like that. The Top and Leos!

It's like together you can do it!

Chris: Yeah and that was the idea behind moving to Gainesville, like that is such a big thing when you finally feel that like I can rely on you cos you are in the same thing I am. You are from a totally different place and totally different life but there is that spirit! Touring on a magazine called BOOK YOUR OWN FUCKING LIFE for years on end seems like a crazy idea until you think of the fact that there is somebody organizing this book

FULL of contacts. It's obviously not that crazy cos it's a book FULL of contacts. The fact that you can make a book full of contacts of people willing to put up your band, feed your ass, get you a show, maybe get you enough gas money to get you to the next show it's fucking phenomenal, that is a HUGE deal! That was amazing!

Returning the generosity shown to HWM on the road is also very important to these guys.

Chris: I remember Cursive came to town, must of been about 7 years ago and I had a one bedroom efficiency apartment, the shower drain was just a hole in the floor, I could play fetch with my dog by putting the tennis ball on the floor and it would just roll to the other side of the room, it was totally beau beau ass shit right? I was completely broke, I had a kid at that point and I was struggling to pay for whatever I could for him and struggling to stay on tour and struggling to keep my gear going and struggling to whatever... I had nothing! I had a little tiny pot that I could cook cans of soup in and I would eat half and my dog would eat half, I didn't have any fuckin' silverware and this whole band Cursive came and stayed at my place. I didn't have a bed. I didn't have any chairs. You had to sleep on the floor in a sleeping bag and if you slept completely next to somebody you could fit six people in there! And the whole band stayed there, and they got there after the show and they were like, "we wanna make some food" and

I'm like fuck man we need to go buy some pots and pans then, what do you wanna cook? So we went to the store and first we figured out what they wanted to cook then we went to find all the pots and pans needed to cook it and then we needed plates cos I didn't have anything! The whole band stayed there and didn't complain or anything.

George: Yeah the place was ridiculous, it's like you walked in and you were like, 'you gotta be kidding me'

Chris: The only thing in there was a sleeping bag that me and my dog slept on and a desk that the stereo was on and the records were underneath. That was it.

Reminds me of my first apartment in LA, I too had nothing, but it was no big deal cos it was what I needed to be doing at the time.

Chris: It sounds weird talking about it, but it was no big deal. Its not like this tragic story cos I'm living my life the way I want to and this sucks right now, but this is temporary.

George: It's the 5 for a dollar ramen and your stoked, you don't care! All that really mattered was the shows and the music!

It's amazing how it can change so quickly.

Chris: No not really, I just did this with you a few months ago. I just showed up in San Francisco and you were crashing at a friend's house and then invited me to come crash along with you at his house! And I knew I had to get like 8 hours down the coast but I had

no idea how I was gonna get there and we worked it out and then when we got there I didn't know where I was gonna be staying and that lasted for a few days. After a week I finally made it to my destination after mysterious car rides and family dinners of people I have no idea of who they are! And it was a great time!

Chris: Things change, but it doesn't change that much.

Sometimes the couches get more comfortable.

Chris: Sometimes, sometimes, but it's no big deal. I love this carnie shit, and it's not so much just being on the road, but being part of this weird ass family that I just can't seem to put into words. Just the fact that there are countless people you've never met that you'll meet tomorrow and treat them like you've known them your entire life it's just kinda fascinating! Jason Black has acted as the band organizer, Morn, tour manager, and for most of the bands existence their manager in general. He makes it happen. Jason and I discussed what it takes to be a career musician and that it takes a lot more than just practicing to get to the next show.

Jason: FOR ME this is a fuckin' job. There is not a day where I don't do stuff for the band. We can be off for six months and still not a day goes by where I don't do something for the band. My life is band orientated and a lot of it is shitty stuff that I don't ever want to do, never thought I would be doing, but at the same time it's kinda a morbid curiosity. The business managerial shit, like telling my dudes I can't give them any more money or yelling at my friend at Epitaph for not doing something I think they should have done, it sucks yelling at people you dig, you know they are working hard and you're working really hard too, so sometimes you just have to burn out and sometimes you do have to call people out on pulling their own weight, and it fuckin' sucks. There is the constant challenge to make it like a family, but also the fact that if I don't do this I'm not going to fuckin' eat. At the end of the day I get to go play shows and make records and I love it, I would never want to do anything else for the rest of my life, I fuckin' love it. But everyone at Epitaph gets up every morning to go to work for me. Why shouldn't I do the same thing, wake up every morning and do something to help me too? Billy Corgan is the asshole who said, 'every morning I wake up at 9 am and either I write or the Smashing Pumpkins practice everyday. I dig it, but it can turn into something really shitty if you let it.

What kinds of specific things do you do for the band on an aver-

age day?

Jason: It varies depending on where everyone's head is at and depending if I can railroad everyone into doing stuff, but what do I do? Well like right now working with our booking agent to book the tours and what bands to take, working with our booking agent to go over all the offers and figuring out routings and packages and ticket prices and all that kinda stuff. Getting the deadlines together for the record. Getting the tours planned out so they make sense, which they don't always, but to be on the road at the right time in the right place and making sure the label knows that and making sure that they are on the same page and then getting the label organized to get all their press together and interviews and marketing plans and making sense out of it. It's a lot of shit.

How did you learn to do all that?

Jason: I didn't and I still don't know. I was the first one with a cell phone and email and all that shit. It just kinda all fell in my lap. Shit, organizing these guys and telling them what we need to do and when and if it's cool with everybody, getting our crew tickets and all the shipping and merch orders and merch designs, the website. There's days where it doesn't take up any time and then there are weeks where I work 12 hour days. I've learned to pick my battles, I'd rather be chilling going to a movie or the bar instead of arguing over how many records we've shipped. I think it's also more difficult cos I'm actually in the band, so dealing with labels and stuff sometimes I don't think they pay as much attention as if I was a big cracker jack manager guy. I think it also can work to my advantage though cos nobody wants to piss the dude in the band off. Nobody wants to tell me 'no,' but at the same time it can get strenuous cos if I'm yelling at the label the band is yelling at the label instead of third party blame.

(Wollard comes in singing)

Jason: If you're not going to take part in the interview you can't interrupt it anymore!
(Wollard sings louder)

So what's it like trying to get Chris Wollard to do things on a daily basis?

Chris: I do lots of things on a daily basis, but trying to get me to do thing that I don't normally do might be kinda hard.

Jason: Again, I pick my battles. I figure out if he cares or not and then if he cares I'll call him and leave him a message trying to convince him it was his idea to do it. Sometimes it works and he thinks it's a great plan and then off we go!

Chris: He already knows what I'm going to agree with anyway

Jason: And if I know there is no

option for him to disagree and have another option then I just go ahead and make the decision he didn't want to.

Chris: I know I'm a pain in the ass so I stay at home! I know I'm a pain in the ass, I know!

Jason: I try not to call them (the band) unless I absolutely have to, and they've gotten a lot better at just being like, 'whatever.'

Chris: I think I've gotten better about it cos when you or George call me is cos we're fuckin' jamming! That kinda shit I love doing!

Jason: The only time it really sucks is when one of us will get pissed and say, 'why the fuck are we doing this' and I'm like, 'well, cos I've been working on it for three months while you've been watching movies and now your pissed, I don't really care.' And that doesn't happen very often and when it does, usually about 10 seconds after it happens the person is like, 'whoa sorry dude bad day?' This is what I like doing, and even the stuff I complain about, like all the business stuff, I do dig it, it's cool to know how people try to sell records, why people buy records and what people dig and it's thoroughly frustrating too because you watch popularity get bought by a lot of bands.

Would you be satisfied with that?

Jason: NO not at all. I could do it if I was just playing bass for a solo artist or something cos I also totally enjoy just playing bass.

George: I think that if we would be ok with that we would have already done it.

Is this part of why you've lasted so long?

Jason: Well yeah, no matter what we can say anything to each other.

Chris: It's already been said!

Jason: We just don't take it personally cos it's not meant that way. It's like Jesus Christ! I live with three dudes and I'm fuckin' gonna have to vent on your ass every once and a while.

Let's talk about life in the Van.

Jason: Avail still have the Vanarchy! George and I were just talking about the van today and how we all keep talking about getting a Castle like the Souls yet for some reason we just keep riding around in the van man! We're like, 'well that tour is gonna be crowded' and there we are all hanging out in the van, it's weird, touring in a van fucking sucks sometimes but it's really awesome sometimes too.

Chris: I don't even like that van and I'm soooo attached to it.

Jason: You feel pride that you rolled up to the show with all the tour buses, we've rolled up to some weird shows with a tour bus and been like, 'god I wish we could get a van for the day so we

didn't feel like dicks.'

Chris: More than that for me is, 'ok every other time we've come to this city we've rolled around town hanging with our friends and now I'm stuck in this bus in a parking lot and no way to go anywhere.'

Jason: And we can't stay at this hotel or fuckin' wall-mart cos we can't park the fuckin' bus there...

Chris: ...and fucking bus you can't decide anything for yourself. Even with the RV with your friend driving, sometimes you just can't find a place to park. The van is kinda cool out there, and you are more mobile. It kinda sucks being in it, but it's kinda cool a whole van full of people piling out after this crazy drive and everybody is totally cracked!

Do you wrestle and fight in the van?

Jason: Chuck hit me in the fuckin' head once!

Chris: Ok I'll tell the story. I was in the seat right behind the driver and Jason was the driver, Chuck was sitting next to me. First of all we are not even out of the neighborhood yet.

Jason: We are a block from my house at a gas station...

Chris: ...and we're waiting at the light and we are like one car length away from pulling into the gas station on the corner and we're just sitting there, all talking shit, getting amped for tour, still getting ready to get gas, we were all talking shit about something.

Jason: Somebody was driving all stupid and we couldn't get the van into where we needed at the gas station.

Chris: Yeah we were blocked and shouldn't have been, but that has nothing to do with it.

Jason: Chuck leaned over me

and started honking the horn!

Chris: Oh yeah this is so great!!

Yeah, the car wouldn't move up.

We coulda got in there right, so Chuck got all impatient and he like jumps over Jason and lays on the horn and is screaming at her and we're like parked right there and it's this poor lady in the car and a van load of dudes and we just look menacing and so Jason turns and flips Chucks hat off his head and is like, 'what the fuck are you doing?'

Jason: I'm like beat it! I'm trying to drive!

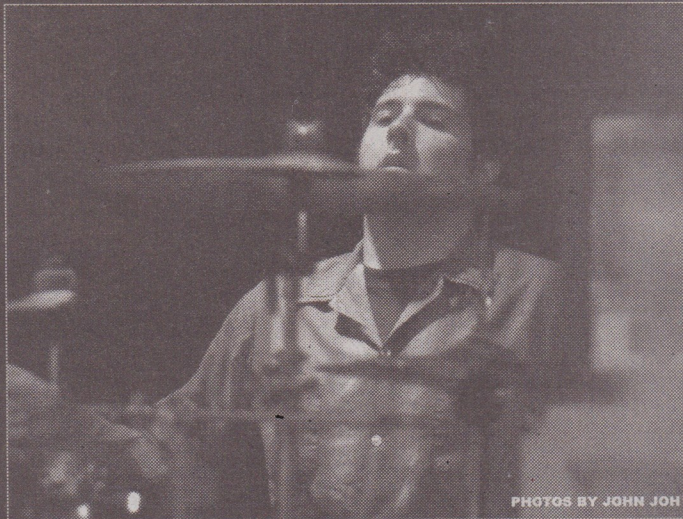
Chris: Cos the lady is looking at Jason like, 'what the fuck asshole!?' So Chuck dives on top of Jason while he's in the driver's seat and hits him.

Jason: He totally went nuts, totally insane!

Chris: So these two get locked in a fuckin' scuffle and I'm sitting behind the driver's seat and so they are like on me cos he's half in the back and Chuck is half in the front

Jason: Total disaster!

Chris: Meanwhile they are fighting



PHOTOS BY JOHN JOH

and Jason's foot comes off the break. I'm sitting there going STOP IT! STOP IT! And they are like 'no way man' and I'm like NO THE VAN! STOP THE VAN!! And we totally ram this lady that Chuck was just honking at! She jumps out of the car and starts screaming at us and Jason and Chuck are still fighting so she sees this and just gets back in her car and takes off!!

Jason: She saw us and didn't say shit, she didn't say a fuckin' word!

Chris: So then we pulled into the gas station and we were like, 'oh my god the tour is cancelled right?' and like Jason was like, 'fuck this man!' and walks down to the ATM, I start pumping gas and Chuck is like 'oh man' put his head down and then walked over to the ATM and they come back like 5 minutes later and everything was totally fine.

Jason: Everything was totally fine but I was like, 'god relax!' That is a good example of how Chuck is conceivably the most impatient person alive and how I snap real easy! That is some funny shit and this was Reno's first tour with us and he had just got in the van with us and watched me and Chuck flip our lids not 5 minutes after being in the van.

Chris: I remember Chuck telling Jason, 'I'm sorry man, when I was punching you I was really punching someone else.' Jason's like, 'its cool man.'

Jason: I'm like it's cool man just don't do it while I'm driving!

Lets talk about Chuck, he's not around.

Jason: Chuck is a son of a bitch.

George: Psychology with Hot Water Music!

Jason: He's such an amazingly generous person. (Jason's BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER cell phones rings!) His generosity is the coolest part about that cat, but also such his Achilles heel. Always over extending himself and not people pleaser kinda way, but he really digs doing shit for other

people and making other people happy and then they fuck up and don't ever make themselves happy and do this reverse motion into super selfish mode and it's just like bad sometimes.

The Giver breaks down?

Jason: Yeah totally. And it's sick... Like the dude won't let me not eat a massive dinner every night when were here for example. He's like, 'what do you wanna eat?' and I'm like, 'Boca burgers is fine,' and he's like, 'no' and cooks like the most amazing...

George: ...chicken cacciatore or pesto pasta.

Jason: He'll make all the chicken cacciatore then never eat any and be all pissed off and hungry. But I've never met a nicer guy in my whole life, ever. He is the nicest person I've ever met, but it's like everyone... You can also be the biggest son of a bitch in the world. There is a balance with all four of us like that. We all flip to the exact opposite.

George: We all love and hate each other all at the same time.

George was saying the same thing...

Jason: I'm a huge asshole on the surface but actually really nice sometimes?

No, it wasn't that specific, it was that there are two sides to everything and that as passionate and wonderful something can be it can also be as grueling and a struggle.

Jason: Totally, that is how I think of all four of us, all of our pros and definitely all of our cons too. The good thing is that we all know what each other's down sides are and what the up sides are and we roll with it. We can call each other out on our shit and it's never really that big of a deal. You can be point blank with somebody and it might turn into an argument but it's never going to be a personal argument. They are my friends.

George what do you admire about

Jason?

George: I don't know how to put it in words, I guess I'm a pretty karma based person and he's not really, and he'll say and do some certain shit that in my perfect world doesn't make any sense but it doesn't fuck up his mojo in any given situation. If that bitch is having a good day or a bad day it doesn't matter he still plays bass like he's a fuckin' motherfucker. It doesn't ever seem to effect him, shit that's going on in his personal life never really effects him on stage, other than the occasionally he's too drunk. He'll admit it but usually like no matter what girlfriend or whatever he brings it every night. It's really hard for me to separate that from when I'm on stage. I can't fake it and I'm not saying that he does, cos he doesn't, but I'm saying that it's easier for him to say, 'ok this is what I'm doing now and I know all this other personal shit is going on in my life, but I have to ignore it because this is what I'm here to do right this second.' And I can't do that as well, so every time he does it and pulls it off I'm like, 'you son of a bitch!'

Band mate first or friend?

Jason: Friends. That's why we broke up in the first place.

George: He was a friend first, even though we've been around the world and we've had our problems, but ultimately I know that actually I love him and he loves me and like, no matter what the fuck happens, it's all good. He's the guy that went through college and I didn't and he's like, 'I've got my degree and I'm gonna manage the band,' and he does, essentially he manages the band and he's into that. Like checkin' soundscans and advertising, cos ultimately all we want is to be able to buy houses and live off our music. Be a career musician, which we are, but it's tough to do what we do, we don't make a lot of money.

Do you feel the same way about your guitar players?

George: Oh yeah, we're all fruity as hell! We're crazy, every single one of us has something good to offer. If you could blend the four of us into one person we'd be the perfect individual I think, but we can't. The rest of my band is everything I'm not but everything I strive to be.

Chuck: Chris... just knowing him over the years, he is the most imaginative prolific talented song writer I have ever known. He just never ceases to amaze me. Just another reason to feel like the luckiest guy in the world to be playing with three guys like this. I've always respected his playing ability, his drive, his heart, his imagination, his soul, just everything about Chris Wollard. If anyone knows Chris Wollard aside from the face on the record or the guy up on stage, you know, you know it is definitely an experience being friends with him. Most of the time he's a pretty big pain in the ass! He is no ones tool or pet he always does his own thing.

Chuck, what about your drummer?

Chuck: Me and George were roomies and we lived together for a long time, whenever I was just not comfortable at home or having problems his family would welcome me in. Not that I came from a bad home or anything, just pretty strict most of the time and I was rebellious.

Tell me about living in LA.

Chuck: I'm living in LA now which is crazy for me cos I'm a country boy. Gainesville was too big for me and I got the hell outta there and it's not that big ya know? Moved out to Menobie for a couple years before I moved to LA and out there it was fine if I wanted to build a fire 10 feet high or if you wanna shoot guns. Shoot guns, park where ever you want on the property, do that! Country

life opposed to living in a city is just another world. Moving to LA is probably one of the biggest culture shocks I've had, even more so than traveling over seas at times. I went from this really slow paced life where I would get up and if I was working I do my work and it's quiet. You don't hear traffic and then I'd find myself out on the water somewhere. LA, Jill has shown me, I use to hate LA; I wouldn't drive into it whenever we were on tour I'd always pull over and have somebody else drive into the city. I just couldn't stand it. I'd bug out in traffic really bad, so I just use to have this really deep hatred for LA as a plastic society and I didn't care for a lot of the attitude I had experienced there. A lot of it was just stereotypes that I just listened to but moving out there all the sudden I'd get out there with my girl and she showed me a whole other world to it. All the opportunity and things to do and artists, the little communities and I can kind of go, 'hey it's not all plastic out here.' There is real world here too, there are true souls and good people just like anywhere else. When we are home we usually get out of the city, we either take off and go to Mexico or the mountains, we like flipping coins sometimes. North or South, flip a coin and pack accordingly. Its fun, I don't know if you've ever done that. Trashy, but just flip a coin and go on a trip cos it's always fun to go on a trip and end up where you never expected.

Flipping coins at the crossroads.
Chuck: I grew up in the woods, I was born and raised in The South, my Pawpaw and Mawma on my mother's side I've always known em and grown up around them in Texas. They were never wealthy folks. Always hard workers and I grew up around them, they lived off the land they always had melon patches and bean gardens and you name it. They grew their own food and we hunted and we fished. That was how we did it. For the most part when we were there we ate vegetables that we grew and fish that we caught and game that we shot and that was just part of living. For us as kids growing up, me and my little brother Paul, that was just awesome, just being in the woods or on the water. They taught me the cycle, I miss it, I feel like I stepped out of it and I miss it.

Seems similar to the philosophy of the band the whole survival thing of this is what we do and this is how we are going to get there, just take the step in front of us. Like the cycle of a bands life much like they cycle of nature.
Chuck: Using your resources, yeah, I guess so in some ways.
George is buying a house, Chuck



PHOTO BY CHRIS PIPER

is getting married, what are you doing Chris?

Chris: I'm just hitting my stride; I'm going to keep doing this.

What?

Chris: Making records.

What kind of records?

Chris: Whatever! I wanna keep making records, and I wanna buy a house, but I'm kinda broke so I the only thing I can do is play guitar and hang out with my girlfriend. But doing a lot of cool shit. A new Cro(w)s record, Blacktop shit, electronic shit me and George are working on. We want to blend big room drums with acoustic guitars and old twang guitars with modern beats and crazy shit. All I'm going to do all summer is record, just record.

Where do you record?

Chris: Everywhere! I go to Rob McGregor's in Gainesville, which is awesome cos we've worked together on so many projects and we think the same things about guitars and he knows how the drum sound will swell in his place. I could try but I have no fucking clue about that shit, but we agree on what I do know. So I like recording with him a lot! I'd like to record some with Brett (Guerwitz), do some more jamming with Brett, I've never like sat in a studio with Brett and tried to get sounds or anything, which I think would be interesting. All we've done is record at his little home recording studio.

Are you going to have credits on the Bad Religion record?

Chris: Well it should! Those two

songs are supposed to be listed as Guerwitz/Wollard/Wackerman or whatever!

George: That is totally cool.

We've talked about you all as individuals, and as a band, of course about the mighty touring vessel, but let's talk about your support, tell me about your crew.

Jason: This is the best crew we've ever had right now. No offense to any of our old crew, but right now there are seven of us dedicated and it actually works with all seven of us.

What do they do for you, why are they necessary?

Jason: Cos we are lazy. A lot of it has to do with Avail and the way they were with their old crew is that they are totally a part of the band. You get to a point where you spend a couple years on the road with somebody and you don't want anyone else there. They are our family, when we go on tour that's who is coming. This is the first time where we've had three people in place and it feels like they all need to stay. It's also important to have someone besides the guys in the fucking band to talk to once in a while when you are on the road, cos we've been up each others ass for 10 years, a lot of us even longer, so it's good to go like, 'dude this guy sucks!' and then they kinda just listen and do the good friend thing and then you're cool and it's done. And it's nice too cos there are days on tour where Wollard will have a totally different tour day than me, like I'll stay in the hotel room and he'll go to the carnival.

Chris: The carnival?!

Jason: You know like go and do some weird shit.

Chris: Yeah, don't take it wrong. Everybody likes the carnival around us, everybody! I just might get a little more fun out of it.
Jason: And you are the guy that goes the most, if you see a Ferris wheel, there your ass is! You are a gravitron whore!

Chris: I do love the gravitron!

George: I do love that we are in a position to pay people that wanna do the same thing we are doing to kinda bring them into the family and pay our friends. Like John is a great sound guy and I like to sound good every night. I wanna give him money to do that; you know what I mean? Its awesome that he can quit his day job to come out on tour with us, like Jason was saying it's nice to have someone there to relate to...

Jason: I hang out with that asshole 24/7 when I am at home, too.

George: Pepper is the same way, she wants to get out of Gainesville and she wants to sell merch and she also has a good eye for what looks nice on a T-shirt and is into that artsy whatever and will work with Jason to make a nice T-shirt. Again, we can pay our friends to come out and do what they love to do and join our team. Same thing with Frey!

Jason: The thing too, is I've never had a crew thank me as much as they do, they are so stoked! They wanna be here as much as we do, it's not a proper gig if everybody isn't down and they are down!

Talking about lasting 10 years,

what does it take to be a career musician and does success or lack thereof support your longevity? How are you going to be a career musician unless you are successful? How will you pay the bills?

Jason: You can't tour like we tour unless you make some fuckin' money. That's the bottom line. But at the same time for us, we thought we were successful when we put out a seven inch, and every step since then is just stoked out the same way. Like holy shit we're on Epitaph, holy shit we got 5 thousand dollars to go make a record, which when we started making records was an insane amount of money to go make a record for a punk band our size.

Chris: Shit man if we would pay for the recording we were stoked to just get someone to pay for the pressing.

Jason: So that is one of my favorite things about it is its such a baby steps the whole time that I think we'll be cool with whatever or where ever we end up. I think that if we did sell like a bazillion records I don't think we would lose our heads doing it cos we've been putzing away at it for so long that you can kinda throw anything at us and we're all right with it.

Chris: The thing that's made us last 10 years is how little everybody has liked us along the way.

George: Wow you guys have really thought about this.

Jason: Like our homies in New Found Glory, they kicked around.

George: Did you call them homos?

Jason: Oh shut up and have another glass of sangria man! Shit man Jesus Christ! Back to our homies, they kicked around for three or four years and out of nowhere they are huge, you know I couldn't deal with that. Like touring in a minivan and then three months later being in a bus and selling out to 3000 people.

(George continues to mumble)
Chris: How about having to hire a bodyguard!

Jason: It would suck. I would love to sell a thousand-bazillion fuckin' records, BUT I don't ever wanna not be able to walk into 7-11 and buy a fuckin' case a beer and some smokes.

Chris: I don't think you're gonna have to worry about it.

Jason: And nobody thinks they are gonna have to worry about it before it happens. You know what I mean, it's freaky! That is weird shit to me, to be hanging out with one of my friends and watch somebody lose their ass when they see 'em. Like it will happen with Dave or Matt and it's like dude it's Davey. He's a fuckin' nerd! I love him to death but he is just a dude ya know? That whole level of weirdo icon shit is just weird, I get nervous meeting people but I also don't

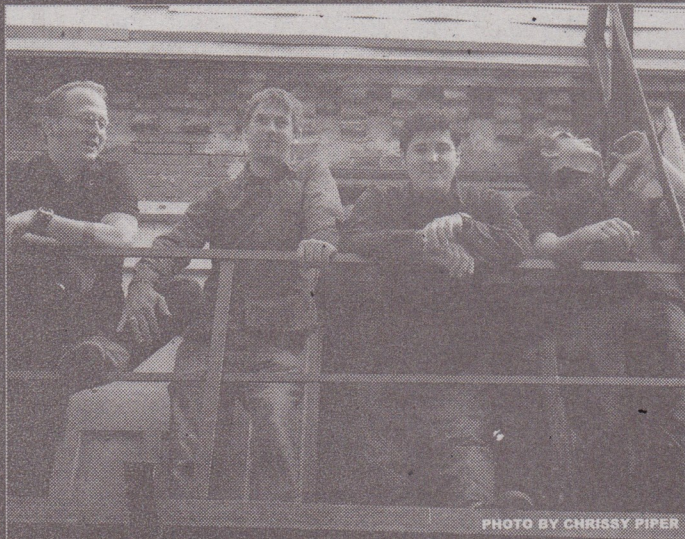


PHOTO BY CHRIS PIPER

talk to people if I know I'm just going to be a dick head. It awesome to have people recognize you and really dig what you do but at the same time it is also really invasive and they dig what you do for all the wrong reasons, to us anyway.

Chris: I need one of your cigarettes.

Jason: Take one of George's.

So what are you guys doing when you are done making this record?
Jason: Take the summer off.

Chris: Making more records, I'll be in the studio the whole time.

George: Drink beers with Jason, write some songs with Chris and just basically hang out and annoy the fucking shit out of each other.

Jason: Yeah, that's what we'll do, we'll take a week off then just start hanging out with each other and writing songs again!

Chris: Figure out ways to con our friends into putting out more records.

George: Convince them that we actually do have good ideas.

Chris: Call up No Idea and be like, 'hey uh we were talking about doing this record.' Well I think Hot Waters doing enough records this year, oh well this one is called...blah blah whatever, I don't know man!

Jason: It's all four of us but it's totally different!

PROLIFIC!!! What's it like trying to maintain relationships when you are on the road so much, you've been on tour for 10 years how do you keep a home life going?

Jason: I haven't yet.

George: You can't. There are a lucky few that make it out alive.

Jason: The thing now is I have a really hard time sitting still, I don't like being in the same place for very long, home is where you make it. I sleep better on a bus than I do in my bed in my bedroom.

Chris: My bed is awesome!

Jason: I do need a new bed but I

don't know, the pay off is playing the shows. Mike Watt said it best. He said there's gigs and there's flyers and records and ways of promoting the records but the records are just the way of getting people to gigs, that is where it all goes down, and that is how I feel about it, the show is THE SHOW. We played shows before we put our records, before we ever thought about putting our records. So yeah, touring sucks but if you don't tour you don't get to play the shows.

Let's talk about the myth, the legends, the whiskey and beer.

Chris: Will you turn that fuckin' thing on already (pointing to the tape recorder that has been recording all day).

Is it that you guys are just so much better than everyone to begin with that you can get on stage drunk and still do it?

George: No we've just had more practice at it. Or both.

Chris: I'd like to thank the Jeebus of the Naz.

George: It breaks down like this, touring is fucking boring, so fucking boring, so what are you gonna do when there are some drinks backstage? All the sudden you're drunk.

Do you go on tour to play or to drink?

George: We go on tour to PLAY!

Jason: We go on tour to party and that includes playing! We drink. And if you challenge it we really drink, that's when it gets bad. Like Kate Hiltz in Dallas, (pretending to be K8) 'You challenging the great state of New Jersey's drinking capabilities?!' and then she didn't know her name the next day! HA! I don't think its soooo whatever when we drink like some of the kids say, but there is one night on tour for each of us when you look over and your like wow. **Chris:** I can't remember ever.

passing out.

Jason: I agree.

George: There is a lot of truth in that.

Jason: I think a lot of it especially over here (referring to the US) and I'm not making excuses for us cos it would happen even if we never left the country, but you go to other countries and it's not a big fuckin' deal. (laughter all around) People go to work, get off, go to the bar and get fuckin' shit assed, then go home.

Chris: It's nice to get out of Gainesville and go somewhere where people drink a lot! (sure cos they don't drink in Gainesville do they Chris?)

George: Some people take Prozac, some people drink beer, whatever works for you.

Jason: NO we spend a good half of our set laughing at each other. It's not like we don't take it seriously, but I don't get all choked up over playing.

Chris: It's not a fucking job.

Jason: It's like I get all choked up and, 'I can't believe Chris wrote these fucking lyrics, boohoo!'

George: You don't? Ah man I don't think Jason is on our page.

Chris: Yeah, you know I put a lot of WORK into those lyrics man, a lot of life man, I hurt, a lot of pain!

Jason: I like your lyrics man they just don't make me cry all the time.

Chris: They make me cry.

George: They make me cry too.

Jason: Emo schema.

Chris calls me out.

Chris: The kids never said they are so emo they have to get drunk to get on stage to play their songs.

Have you ever read some of those message boards?

Chris: NO

Jason: He doesn't even know how to check his email let alone read a message board.

What are with the flip-flops you guys always wear?

(In unison as if they've heard the question before)

Jason, Chris, George: WE'RE FROM FLORIDA!

Jason: It's like 900 degrees all summer and if you wear shoes your goddamn feet will burn off.

George: We were born wearing flip-flops

Jason: Yeah you're born with a flip-flop in your mouth and a Jimmy Buffet CD in your ass.

George: What's the problem? What's the problem?

10th anniversary of Hot Water Music, what got you this far, what would be in the survival kit?

George: shot glass, aspirin, condom, razor blade, noose...

Chris: That is NOT a survival kit.

Jason: That is more a description of your last five minutes on earth! ☛

JADE TREE SADDLE CREEK EQUAL VISION NO IDEA LEVEL PLANE
 HYDRA HEAD FERRET VAGRANT FAT WRECK EYEBALL
 DISCHORD ROBOTIC EMPIRE SUICIDE SQUEEZE IPECAC
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 ROBOTIC EMPIRE DOGHOUSE MATADOR PROSTHETIC
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 THREE ONE G SOUTHERN STILLBORN GOOD LIFE
 CHUNKSAAH TRIPLE CROWN SOME SUB POP BARSUK
 FEARLESS FRENCH KISS TORTUGA DRIVE THRU INITIAL
 SOUTHERN LORD REVELATION ALONE PUNK CORE
 FUELED BY RAMEN TROUBLEMAN UNLIMITED EULOGY
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NOVEMBER ENTRY:
QUEEN OF THE BEACH

This is all about looking backwards- the book "Looking Backwards," by Edward Bellamy. What, you've never heard of it? Check out this info from the education critic/Libertarian John Taylor Gatto: "The three most influential books ever published in North America, setting aside the Bible and The New England Primer, were all published in the years of the utopian transformation of America which gave us government schooling: Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly (1852), a book which testifies to the ancient obsession of English-speaking elites with the salvation of the under- classes; Ben-Hur (1880), a book illustrating the Christian belief that Jews can eventually be made to see the light of reason and converted; and the last a pure utopia, Looking Backwards (1888), still in print more than one hundred years later, translated into thirty languages..."

In 1944, three American intellectuals, Charles Beard, John Dewey, and Edward Weeks, interviewed separately, proclaimed Edward Bellamy's Looking Backwards second only to Marx's Das Kapital as the most influential book of modern times."

[By quoting Gatto, I am not endorsing his non-Bellamy-related opinions] Nowadays, Bellamy's 1888 classic is notable as a statement of what societal problems the Industrial Age saw as vital to resolve in the future. Like most utopian fiction, some of the book's future became fact, while most of it remained fiction. It's really useful as a measuring stick of what problems were seen as major by various utopians over the decades. Bellamy's main issue was the beginning of the labor/class struggle, while George Orwell's (in "1984") was the tendencies towards totalitarianism of human governance in the 20th Century. Forty years after Orwell published "1984" (1949, if you're keeping track), p.m.'s "bolo'bolo" targeted the positive aspects of living for oneself and for one's community. This last attempted to adjust its utopian vision for the realities of the late 20th Century, with various options for individuals and for the world-wide population.

CRUEL SURF

Years ago, when MaximumRocknRoll's book review section began, we talked about doing a series of reviews of the classic utopian and dystopian novels- perhaps that's an idea whose time has come. A short list would include "Looking Backwards," "1984," "Brave New World" (Aldous Huxley), and "bolo'bolo." Perhaps dystopias like "Swastika Night" (Katherine Burdekin, reprinted by The Feminist Press in 1985), "Animal Farm" (Orwell), "The Handmaid's Tale" (Margaret Atwood), "It Can't Happen Here" (Sinclair Lewis), and perhaps "The Plot Against America" (new from Phillip Roth) would also be included.

Maybe this fixation on dystopias is a twisted reaction to running for political office (I'm sure we need your financial support at townleyfor-council.org no matter WHAT happened on election day, so please check out the site for the latest!), or maybe it's human nature to wonder "What If?" (Heck, the Marvel comic series "What If" was just so-so [although I always DID fantasize about Spider-Man joining the Fantastic Four] since it only applied to the comic world.)

Wait! Must! Stop! Writing! With! Excessive! Parenthesis! Who! Do! !! Think! !! Am! Comma! Reverend! Norb! Question Mark! Er, "?"

WANTED BY THE LAW


I've been immersed in the turn of the 20th Century recently. I finally read Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle," which was re-released in its original, full form by See Sharp Press last year. If you've never read it, find this version (www.seesharppress.com). I was ready to go fight the meatpacker industry myself, except it stopped existing 100 years ago! Anyway, it's a real humdinger of a book, and gets the blood flowing against the capitalist oppressors pretty darn good. The original form contains a lot more rants about the broader state of society than the version you may have read in school or college, and is much more obviously socialist in its sympathies. Almost 100 years later, it's still a devastating book.

THAT'S WHEN THE TEARDROPS FALL

The turn of the century and the early years of the 1900s are really overlooked in our general culture. From the Civil War up until World War One U.S. history is a litany of forgotten presidents- save Teddy R. But during these 50-some years the country finished its westward expansion and the Industrial Revolution gave rise to the Labor Union and the vast monopoly power of the Combines: Railroad, Banking, Agriculture. There was a huge fight about whether to go on the Gold Standard. Progressives and revolutionaries became part of the normal political landscape in the face of massive capitalist consolidation and repression based on race, union affiliation, gender, and class.

Bringing it back to Bellamy, "Looking Backwards" was a nice find- if you can stomach the prose of Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (think "Sherlock Holmes" and "The Lost World" [yes, THAT 'Lost World'- originally published in 1912]) then you can read Bellamy.

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Product placement- The Frisk are proud to have donated an unreleased tune to the "Rock Against Bush Vol. 1" compilation on Fat Wreck. Go to www.thefrisk.com and www.adelinerecords.net for details about upcoming shows. 

DECEMBER ENTRY:
RECITATION

Now's the time to stay strong and keep fighting the bastards. To stop is to do what they want. Fuck that and fuck them.

TEST TUBE BABY

Speaking of going forward, I just got home from a Punkvoter.com meeting with a ton of folks including Fat Mike, Jello Biafra, and San Francisco Supervisor Matt Gonzalez. We figured out the next steps for PV- and it's going to be a blast!

We're gonna be the "Party Party"- as opposed to just another political action group. Four more years? Four more beers! (homebrew, of course!) We're also switching from election/voter registration mode into watchdog/focused issue mode. There will be ideas on how to Boycott Bush- specifically the big business bastards who bankrolled his campaign- and street level strategies on how to step up and change our local political scene. We'll stay focused, fun-loving, and pissed!

One of the specific issues we'll be concentrating on is the almost inevitable draft and how to register as a Conscientious Objector NOW

JESSE LUSCIOUS

instead of waiting until it's too late. If our troops stay overseas at anywhere near their current levels, the military **MUST** replenish its troops at rates far above current recruitment rates. How to do that besides manufacturing another Gulf of Tonkin incident? The draft. Luckily I'm way beyond draft age, but most of the people reading this are either draft age now or will be within the next 4 years.

Another PV priority is the continuing assault on Roe vs. Wade and related choice issues. Obviously the Supreme Court and other judicial appointments will be key to the survival of legal, accessible abortions and other basic sexual health and sexual education programs. A third is a combination of fighting media consolidation and encouraging media literacy. Less corporations owning more and more media outlets combined with rampant ethic problems within those media outlets (Fox News anyone?) leaves us vulnerable to the rabid demagogues salivating on right wing talk shows and websites. Fight them by checking out books like "The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things" (by Barry Glassner) and "Manufacturing Consent" (by Noam Chomsky)!

A fourth focus for PV in the upcoming months is repairing our democracy. Years of right-wing attacks on eligible voters (false felon purges in Florida 2000 comes to mind) and mismanaged new voting technology have eroded the huge gains made during the civil rights movement. One important piece of this puzzle is happening as I type this paragraph: Both the Green and Libertarian candidates for President (David Cobb and Michael Badnarik respectively) are challenging the results in Ohio and desperately raising the funds needed to do so (\$110,000)- more info at www.gp.org. It may be a lost cause in terms of the eventual winner, but at the very least we, the People, will have a much more accurate vote tally. Plus, the corrupt creeps who are manipulating our system will have a much tougher task if they continue to try to steal local and national elections.

Go to www.punkvoter.com for the latest!

I PULLED MY HELMET OFF (I'M GOING TO LOVE HER)

Many of you know that I am not a new member of the Berkeley City Council- after a hard-fought campaign, the realtor won by a convincing margin over us two challengers. (more info at townleyforcouncil.org) However, I had a great time campaigning, learning, and speaking with all of the constituents, neighborhood associations, volunteers, and other candidates. I learned SO much about local politics and people, and am set to continue to bring our issues to the Council as a serious ex-candidate and current grassroots activist.

For the rest of you, please take my campaign and the other third party campaigns around the country as a signal to do it yourself. I'm not fucking around, it's time for more of us from my generation and from the generation after me to step up. It's completely possible, we were able to run a serious campaign through fundraising alone. A combination of personal contacts and fundraiser events (music, film, spoken word, and visual art events) ensured a campaign in which we ended up solvent. My wife and I are both part of the working class, and were able to loan my campaign only \$143.93- the rest came strictly from performances and donors (our friends and family, and then eventually community members who believed in the campaign). Thanks to everyone, we raised more than \$17,000 and were outspent by the winner by less than 2 to 1. At the local level, you do NOT have to come from money to run (although it doesn't hurt). Of course, between campaign volunteers, my wife, and I, we walked the entire district. I rang a few thousand door-

bells over the months leading up to November 2nd and spoke with hundreds of possible voters. The combination of a grassroots strategy and grassroots fundraising (no other candidate raised funds from a show headlined by Jello Biafra!) made it happen.

Another very important piece of our campaign- and the most expensive one at \$6,000 total- was our campaign manager. He's a progressive (i.e. Green) who had run a few successful campaigns locally and had raised money statewide for the Green Party in 2000. It seemed pointless to reinvent the wheel so we hired someone who knew what to do and when. Of course, we still made mistakes- most of them by me- but it helped immensely to have an experienced advisor.

JET STAR 19

I strongly recommend anyone interested in running a serious local campaign to start thinking about the basics in mid-2005 for a 2006 run. You don't have to actually start working on it for another year or so, but make sure your life is ready for the time commitment a local campaign can demand. In the meantime, get more involved with your local government- are there commissions you can take part in? Is there a Councilmember or Supervisor who is pushing an initiative you support? Have you worked with your local government on a skate park, a venue, police issues, anything? If not, go for it. If so, expand your activities and meet more people who are movers and shakers in your neighborhood and in your town.

ROCKET ROLL

Alright, here's this month's batch of aural awesomeness. Dwarves "The Dwarves Must Die" (Sympathy), Farewell to Youth (Lorelei), Green Day "American Idiot" (like a combo of The Kinks, The Who, and Green Day wouldn't turn me on!), Soviettes "LP11" (Adeline), Jello Biafra with The Melvins "Never Breathe What You Can't See" (Alternative Tentacles), The Clash "London Calling 25th Anniversary Legacy Edition" (I NEVER buy these repackaged classics, except this one's bonus music, sights, and packaging ROCKS!), Barbary Coasters "The Libertine Philosophy of" (Hillsdale), Space Vacuum From Outer Space (2 different cd-r demos), DOA "Live Free Or Die" (Sudden Death), Beastie Boys "To The 5 Boroughs" (the missing link between "License to Ill" and "Paul's Boutique"?), Street Dogs "Savin Hill" (Crosscheck), Lars Fredericksen and the Bastards "Viking" (Hellcat) (the biker-punk record of the Oughts, like Fear "The Record" and Motorhead "Ace Of Spades" before it), Red Planet "We Know How It Goes" (Gearhead), Zolar X "Timeless" (Alternative Tentacles), Die Hunns "Long Legs" (Disaster), and V/A "Letters From The Landfill" (Left Off The Dial).

I've been swamped and unable to catch too many of the newest records, hence the short list. No really, that's a short list! I've also been- as usual- obsessing about releases and artists who are not brand new- but that's another list for another place.

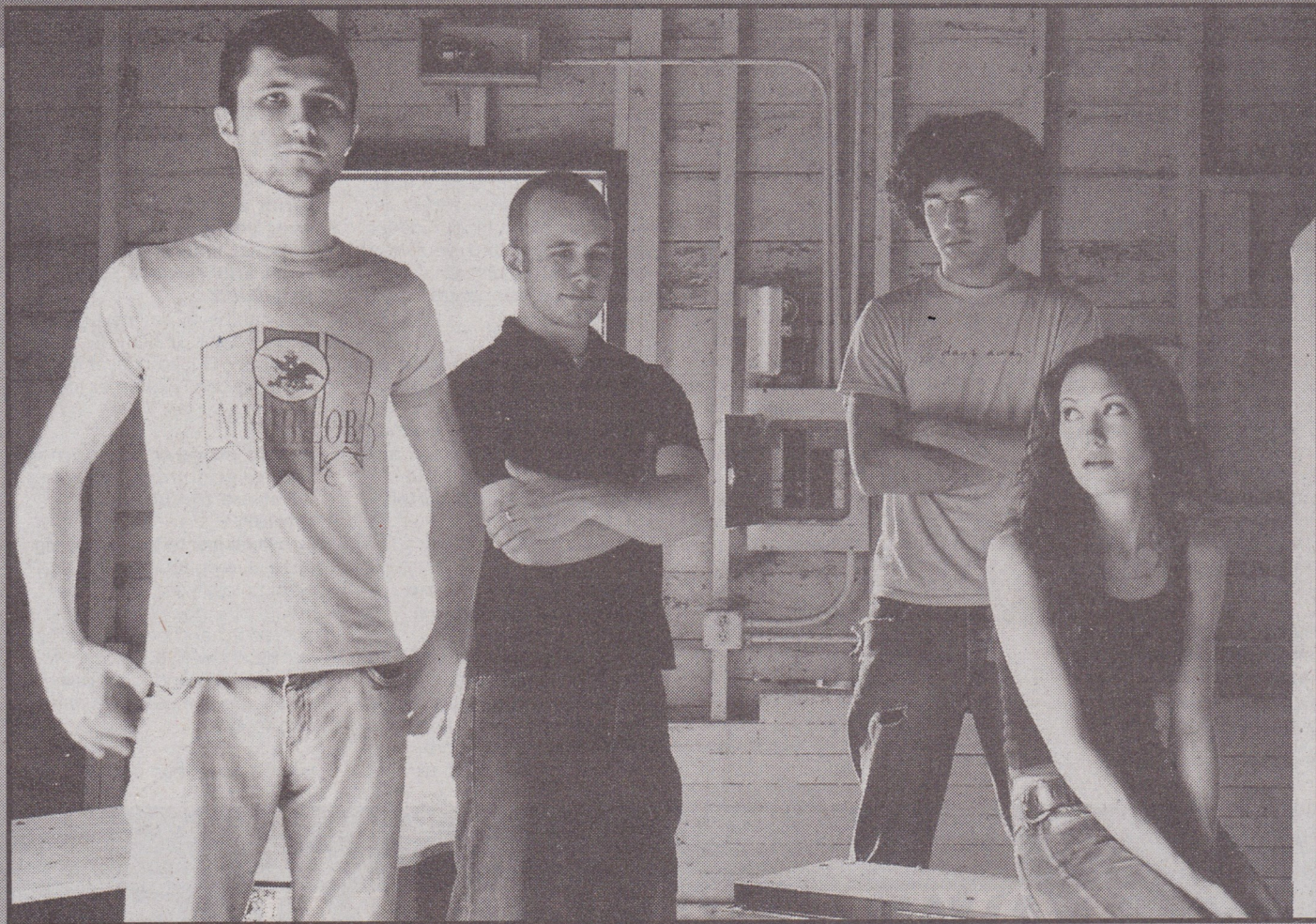
Turbohund East Bay, ruff!

In my constant search for people who've dropped out of my life who I miss, I've joined "My Space"- ack. You can read my- oh god, do I have a goatee yet?- blog there. Fuck me, I'm such a dweeb. If I've been looking for you, or if you've been looking for me, that's as good a place to contact me as anywhere else.

Oh yeah, and go to punkvoter.com, this is just the beginning of a wonderful relationship...

Stay strong, stay true, and always read between the lines! ☛

VICTORY FOR STRAYLIGHT RUN



By Don Sill

Many thought that John Nolan and Shaun Cooper were making the mistake of a lifetime when they walked away from one of Long Island's biggest emo/punk bands, TAKING BACK SUNDAY. "What are these guys thinking?" Many industry insiders would ask, "What are they gonna do now?" The decision appeared to be career suicide. But with personal and creative problems between TBS front man, Adam Lazzara, and guitarist John Nolan weighing too heavy for repair both Nolan and bassist, Cooper walked away from the band before it had even peaked. *What are these guys thinking?*

The future of these two musicians was certainly questionable. *What are they gonna do now?* But neither Nolan nor Cooper wallowed in regret or self pity. Instead the two quickly bounced back with determination and a desire to move forward.

Only a few months after the walk out Nolan and Cooper began writing and recording new tunes together with a few friends. They would soon officially recruit drummer, Will Noon [BREAKING PANGAEA] as well as John's sister, Michelle who was asked to sing, play piano and guitar, and the band

was born.

The four-piece would name themselves STRAYLIGHT RUN, a name taken from a Sci-Fi novel called "Neuromancer" and began releasing music via internet which would ultimately find thousands of ears across the states and abroad creating a fantastic buzz among fans and industry alike.

After a year of touring the U.S. and U.K. without an album to promote STRAYLIGHT RUN have released their highly anticipated Victory Records debut. Self titled, this album is completely different from what some TBS fans may expect. Songs

like "The Perfect Ending", "Your Name Here (Sunrise Highway)" and the first single "Existentialism On Prom Night" are piano driven ballads and "Tool Sheds and Hot Tubs" is actually a disco number. Quite a leap from the emo/punk driven tunes of TBS.

While the album is more slow and melodic than Nolan and Cooper's previous work it serves as a beautiful opus which the songwriters pour their hearts into every note. Track after track encompasses a somber tone, which ultimately demonstrates the wide range of musical and emotional ability

this band is capable of.

AMP caught up with Shaun Cooper and spoke about the new album and what it means to them as well as their fans.

This album is a pretty big step for you guys.

Yeah, it's been crazy. We spent the last year touring without any albums to promote or anything and it was weird. All we had was stuff to download on the Internet. So, now that we have a real release out we're totally ready for it.

That's true, you guys were doing great out on the road despite not having anything to promote. The buzz of the band was so huge.

Yeah, it was really cool and really weird. [Laughs] It just shows how far the Internet is reaching. Everyone has a computer and everyone's online and it was great for us.

What can kids expect when they come to a STRAY-

LIGHT RUN show?

It's just a very honest and heart-felt show, really. We're just putting ourselves out there, you know. We're not doing anything special or flashy or anything like that. But, I think we sound pretty good live and we just do our best up there and give everything we have.

You guys toured all over the states and even played in the U.K. with BRAND NEW. How did the crowd respond to you guys?

It was actually real good. We were very well received, especially since we were opening for bigger bands. I was surprised about the diversity. Like we did some dates with COHEED AND CAMBRIA and then we did some dates with ROONEY and the same people who say us with COHEED were coming back to see us with ROONEY. That's just crazy that they would come out to totally different shows.

That's a great asset to have that diversity, that kind of range.

Yeah, it is really cool and we were very fortunate that COHEED'S fans and ROONEY'S fans could identify

with us. It was surprising.

Now, with this record and with this band- did you feel there was something you had to prove?

I think you always feel like you have something to prove whether you're with one band and come out with a new record or if you start a new band. We definitely felt some pressure but we just wanted to do well and do something that we liked as well. We just trusted ourselves with everything and as long as we did that then we didn't feel too much pressure.

What I admired about STRAYLIGHT RUN is that you guys didn't follow the formula of Taking Back Sunday. This doesn't sound like them. This is more melodic, more piano driven, more ballads. Was that a conscious decision?

We definitely didn't want to recreate what TAKING BACK SUNDAY was doing. They're still around, still relevant and doing their own thing. We didn't want to become an offshoot of that. But I think STRAYLIGHT RUN was just a natural thing that was coming out of John [Nolan] at that current time. He

just started writing songs all by himself and I guess he's just more prone to writing more ballad style stuff.

You wrote some stuff on this album as well?

Yeah and that just happened to be a lot different from what TAKING BACK SUNDAY was doing also. Plus having Michelle [Nolan] in the band- she does completely different music as well. We have a friggin' dance song on this record, you know. We just all had different ideas and it all just happened in a very natural way.

It's refreshing because a lot of people may come into STRAYLIGHT RUN thinking it's gonna be TAKING BACK SUNDAY Jr. and it's not. It's a beautiful album that is completely different from TBS.

Thanks, man.

I mean it...Now tell me what does this album mean to you?

I don't know. This album actually means so much because we had no idea what to expect and we literally put our lives on hold to make this record, write these songs and get it all

together. It means so much. This past year, especially for John and I, was so hard and confusing and we didn't understand what was going on and what the hell we were doing and now- after all this work and all this emotional craziness- this is the end product of it all and is almost like a closure of the past year.

What are the odds of there ever being a double-bill concert with STRAYLIGHT RUN and TAKING BACK SUNDAY?

You can never say never, but it seems highly unlikely. Especially right now. But you never know, anything can happen at any minute.

At this stage of the game, with everything happening, what are the ultimate goals?

Really it's just to tour and continue to keep touring. We don't want to totally fall on our ass. [Laughs]. Hopefully people like our record and people will like our live show. We just want to keep playing and keep being able to do this because we love it so much.

www.straylightrun.com

LOVEHOPEANDFEAR ROSEEP

"Imagine if you can SUICIDE FILE playing PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS songs as heavy as they could, with lyrics that would make Wes (GUTG) proud. A mindblowing CD."

-AMP Magazine

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RAPID FIRE

SHORT
INTERVIEWS
FOR SHORT
ATTENTION
SPANS

PROFILE: A TASTE FOR MURDER

By Peewee

NAME:

Scott

POSITION IN THE BAND:

Vocals

HOMETOWN:

Salem, OR

A TASTE FOR MURDER SOUNDS LIKE:

A mix between The Hope Conspiracy and With Honor. At least we would like to think so.

OUR LABEL (HIGH FIDELITY) IS COOL BECAUSE:

Frank Fidelity has supported us in every way possible. He's put a lot of faith in the band and that means the world to us. He's backed every decision we've made without criticism. We're looking forward to working our asses off to pay him back for all he's done.

FOUR CD'S THAT ARE INFLUENCING ME THE MOST RIGHT NOW:

Right now I would have to say The Warriors "War Is Hell", BARS "Introducing", Taken "between two unseens" and The Physical Challenge "I Quit."

BEST THING TO DO IN THE VAN IS:

Sleep, but the only time I can ever do that is when the driving conditions are perfect. I don't really trust the driving abilities of the other members. Gayson our quote, unquote roadie is a pretty good driver considering he's got a metal plate in his head from a previous car wreck. For some reason I can actually sleep when he's driving though.

WORST DRIVING INCIDENT INVOLVED:

We've been lucky so far and had some close calls, but nothing drastic. We've driven in some pretty shitty weather though. One time on our way back from Spokane, WA we had to drive a hundred and twenty miles on a solid sheet of ice. I was trying to just keep us on the road and ignore all the wrecked and stranded cars on the side of the highway. Our tires on the van were so bad that I could turn the wheel and it didn't do anything. The funny part is that the rest of the guys slept through the whole thing. That sucked.

SALEM HAS INFLUENCED OUR MUSIC IN THE SENSE THAT:

We really wanted to just get the hell out of here. We are way out of the loop when it comes to our hometown. We don't really know what's going on or if there are even



shows happening. There used to be a lot of shows, but of course a few wrecked it for many. I have been surprised by some of bands that popped up here lately. Bands like Ohayo are giving this town a better rep that, I do know. We consider Portland our home.

BEST BAD RELIGION DISC:

Ummm...that's tough. How about "Against the Grain."

UPCOMING TOURS OR RELEASES:

We just released our debut full length "Italian Girls...(The Best in the World)" on High Fidelity Records. We've got some Northwest shows booked then we're heading south in the coming months.

WHEN WE'RE NOT ON TOUR WE EARN OUR LIVING BY:

I think Rvi is a hitman, but he will never really give us a straight answer. He is a master of the black art of phlebotomy for his day job. The rest of us are just kind of bums. A couple of us do go to school, but that's not really earning a living.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT PLAYING SHOWS:

Seeing people that actually care about what you are doing. Making new friends is rad too.

BAND THAT STILL GIVES ME THE CHILLS WHEN I SEE THEM LIVE:

I can never get enough of U2. I'm definitely not a fan of mainstream bullshit or paying 75 bucks to go to a show, but if it were U2 I would cut off my left arm to see them.

WEB INFO:

www.atasteformurder.com

www.highfidelityrecords.com

Clann Zu



By Sameem Lutfi

Political and lyrical genius are a given when you pick up a G7 record, but musical intellect is where Clann Zu reaches further – for once you have a band that not only treasures originality but seems to walk past the phase, the fashion and into the lifestyle of a musician. The Irish & Middle Eastern influences preserved in the oddly meticulous and syntactically disordered music of Clann Zu offer an idiosyncratic flavor, one which aptly portrays the taste of every emotion deemed ineffable.

Why Clann Zu? What does Clann Zu mean?

Benjamin Andrews: Out of all the gay band names we could think of, this one stuck.
Declan de Barra: The lads were keen on an Irish name that people could read phonetically in English. That narrowed it down to about 200 words. After a night of lists I came up with Clann

Zú. Zú being the only "Z" word in the Irish dictionary, as it doesn't exist in Irish alphabet. It literally means family of the zoo of descendants of the zoo. There was no theory or grand plan behind the name. Ben's comments are a distillation of the truth but probably the clearest.

How would you define Clann Zu and its sound?

How do the members interact with each other, in terms of music?

D: Clann Zú is a musical group in the true sense of the word. There are no songwriters in total, it is a collaboration of five very different people musically and personality wise. It is the combination of sounds from these individuals and their interpretation of each others ideas and musical language that makes "Clann Zú." We speak in music primarily. When we write someone will start with an idea, a note or a riff and everyone will interpret that phrase in their own way and respond to it. The original idea is transformed into a new collective emotion or sound. Once the basic sound or emotion is established the song is then structured around that we are all very different people and I'm sure we each see the songs in different ways. We never discuss the emotional content of the songs afterwards. We are usually working on the next one.

Clann Zú's sound seems more intelligent than just a random release of energy, is it a portrayal of your personalities?

B: For me, the answer is NO.

D: I guess for myself it is a partial mirror to my personality. It would be hard to avoid that I suppose as I write the lyrics, many, which are narrative, and many personal in one form or another. Then again it is only partial as what I write is in response to the music which is written by the 4 other members. So it is a diluted portrayal of my personality.

At a time when most bands are mastering their albums digitally, you opted for analog recording – Why so?

B: The last album we did was the most digital recording a band like us could possibly have opted for, so this time round we decided to do things right and record like proper bands are supposed to, entirely in the analog domain. Rock music only sounds good when recorded analog, and given the opportunity to try and be efficient musicians and not lazy wannabe "producers," I think we made the right decision.

D: We spent over a year on Rua, as we recorded and mixed it mostly ourselves on a Mac we spent a lot of time learning. While we were learning what to do we also learned what not to do. When it came to live performance it was very far from the record. As is usual with us we try to do the opposite of what we have done before. Sometimes this works for us sometimes it fails. For this record I think it works well. The idea we had was to go into the studio and do it all live in one bang to get it as close to the live performance as possible. By recording in an analog setting we were forced to rely on our playing skills. It was like pulling teeth at the end as we were under a lot of pressure with time. And the structure of the songs swapping violin to piano etc became difficult to do in one take with sound separation on some songs so we had to do the piano first or band first and do the other on a separate take. It was easier obviously on the Vocal and piano tracks at the beginning and end of the album as we just went in and banged it out in one take. The richness of analog really came through. It was worth the struggle in the end. I think we would do the same again but with more than ten days to record and mix. What the hell were we thinking?

Were there any steady thematic influences, musical or political, you took into consideration when composing and writing the material for the second album?

B. To keep the compositions fairly sparse in instrumentation, but to work on structure and melodic themes in unconventional ways (for us at least, this means not sticking to conservative ideas of how songs should be structured, i.e.; with verses and choruses blah blah.) Also we tried to explore time in a way that we haven't been able to before, notably with the help of the drummer on the record, one Rohan Robeiro.

D: I was hesitant about losing so much in the way of choruses as I am a sucker for a good hook and melody. This was where it was hard meeting up for a record after being apart in two different continents for nearly 5 months. We were all at different spaces individually with different ideas of how the record would sound. Normally we would be jamming lots together and the transition is smooth. This was the first time we had written like this and the first few weeks were quite jarring in terms of mixing the different ideas of how it would work. Like a head on crash as opposed to bumping a shopping trolley with your car at the supermarket. It worked out well in the end, a conglomeration of 5 different musical parts.

The use of the violin is considerably less on the second album, any particular reasons?

B. maybe this is due to the fact that in comparison to Rua, there are not 4-5 overdubs of string sections on this record, which is a better indication of the band in its live context, 'cos we only have one violin player, not a fake string quartet or something!

D: I think also there was more piano in its place. I was staying at Russell's house so we would often be jamming on piano and vocals at 3 in the morning pissing off his neighbors. The first and last track came out of that, but essentially, as Ben said, no overdubs. It was the same with the vocals and guitar for most of the album, just one track. You'll notice on Rua and the first EP there is a lot of layering of instruments voice and percussion.

You earlier described your music as dramatic, while that might still apply to it, I thought the second album was a bit toned down and ambient in the sense that the orchestration was much lighter in the second album as compared to the first. Was that the sound you were going for?

B. I sort of already answered this in the fact that we didn't feel the need to create a HUGE sounding record that gives false impressions of the band. We wanted to create a LIVE sounding record, and we did, warts and all.

D: Honesty was a key word for us when we were discussing how to do the recording. When you see these songs live they will be fairly close in tone and aspect to the recording. You should get the same feeling from listening to it. I think the absence of the Irish music influence also toned down the pace in places. There are no songs like crashing to the floor or Rí Rá songs on this album. It is darker and more cohesive in sound. I'm sure when we record the next album it will sound completely different again.

I felt that a couple of times the music builds up to a point where you think heavy orchestration or hard hitting drums are going to kick in, but they don't - Instead it mellows out again. Was that intentional, do you try and stay away from head-banging music as such?

B. There is nothing wrong with Iron Maiden, Motley Crue or Discordance Axis, it's just that Clann Zu is not one of these bands.

D: I think on our previous recordings we had utilized that technique of build up and release (words for snow etc). It is very satisfying to play and listen too. But we are very conscious as a band of avoiding repetition. So we try to avoid being comfortable in musical patterns, which we know will work. We try and develop, try new methods and patterns. Its a risk, we may fail

and I'm sure we do in places but I would prefer that than becoming a band that repeats itself because they have had success with a form of music before. You can become frightened of growth.

The working title on the album, initially, was "From Bethlehem to Jenin," which is a song on the record; who suggested the change to "Black Coats and Bandages?" Why did you opt for that over the initial title?

B. I think that upon reading Dec's lyrics for this record, I decided that the line from one of the songs, black coats and bandages, seemed like a ringer and fitting for an album title, rather than just using a song title that usually gives false impressions of that song from the outset.

D: It was a very casual thing, Benjamin suggested both and I liked both. I think we were so busy with the recording we didn't attach much significance to the title. It was nice to let someone else pick the title for a change as that usually falls to me with songs title etc.

Politics obviously is a subject you guys cover a lot and are already signed by G7 which is a political label, but how strong are politics in your regular lives. I ask because in an interview with John K Samson (who was also signed to G7 with his band The Weakerthans he said he would not play the Warped tour or do American talk shows due to his strong political and anti-capitalist views. Do your politics stay separate from your musical aspirations or are they very much the same?

D: I can only speak for myself, as I said before Clann Zu is a group of very different individuals with different politics, beliefs and life rules or lack of them. For myself I am very political. I believe that every choice you make is political from how you spend your money to disposing of your waste to how you interact with people. In terms of what I wouldn't do speaking of Clann Zú, there is not much. I believe in using the machine to break the machine or change its course. If I were offered 6 million by Nike to use a Clann Zu song I would take it and give the cash to anti-Nike organizations and trade unions in the countries Nike manufactures in. This to me is far more useful than saying no and them giving the cash to someone else who will pocket the money for themselves. So if I can get on an American talk show and explain why a situation like the Palestinian occupation and oppression is wrong and Americans need to research this outside of biased CNN type media and put pressure on its government to stop supplying and aiding Israel in its illegal activities then I say "great let's do it."

Use the machine against the machine.

As far as G7 is concerned we have a respect for each other. When we were deciding to work with G7 they actually asked me to describe our political position. It was very strange putting my political position on paper, it's something you don't normally do. It's such a large subject and with so many grey areas that is hard to condense. We have very similar positions on social justice issues, the support for the end of Israel's occupation and apartheid of Palestine for example. I'm sure we diverge on certain areas. They are vegan and only some of our members are,



the rest are not even vegetarian. People believe we are an ultra hardcore political band. But in fact we never discuss politics amongst ourselves. I just happen to write lyrics and some of them are political. I write about what moves me and a lot of that is social justice based on what I get for being anti social, and not going out and drinking and partying like other people. I watch too many documentaries.

You don't have a drummer in your line up, why is that? Is bodhran an acceptable substitute at times?

B. Drummers are an elusive breed of mammal that are hard to hold onto in this particular instance, and we have gone through our fair share of them for a variety of undisclosed reasons. For the record, bodhrán will never be a suitable replacement for a drummer in any band that I would enjoy listening to, let alone play in.

D: Drummers are a curse with us. We are very difficult to write with and we have really really high standards for drummers. We are not exactly a fun group to join; we have no money, tour on the bones of our arses, sleep on floors and usually end up paying for our own tickets flying to other countries to play all while starving at times. We do this for the love of the music. It's hard to get someone to commit to that at this stage as we are now so set in our ways. I haven't given up hope yet though. Although it's frustrating it can have a positive side. Working with a new musician can force us to try new methods of writing as we adapt to their playing styles. Bodhrán is a flavor in Clann Zu not the main percussive course. Although I love a lot of bands that have Bodhrán as the main form of percussion, Kila for example. It's probably the most versatile form of percussion besides Tabla. On my solo album I am writing the rhythm is provided almost solely by percussion rather than drums. But for Clann Zu we are definitely based around a solid and progressive drummer.

What were the reasons for your shift from Australia to Ireland? Purely musical?

D: Yes it was musical in the sense that we wanted to expand our audience, we were at a plateau level in Australia at the time. So we decided to base ourselves in Europe for a while. It was very difficult and we lost two original members along the way but it was worth it. The band is now mostly based in Melbourne Australia but I live in Ireland. I travel to Australia to write the albums with the others and then we meet up for tours.

Clann Zu's final statement

We hope you enjoy the music. Pick up an instrument, use your voice. ☛

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DEBUT ALBUM IN STORES FALL 2004

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THEE WHISKEY REBEL

NOVEMBER ENTRY:

MY ONE MILLIONTH CROOKED SCUMBAG PROMOTER

My band Rancid Vat is now about to reach it's 24th year of existence. The world itself has changed quite a bit over the years and so as you might expect has our lineup of band members. The people who come out to our shows look and act differently than the folks we saw back in 1981. The equipment we use is radically different. The labels we've had releases on over the years are mostly long gone. One thing has remained constant; since the day of our band's inception over a Ouija board we have dealt with a seemingly endless line of ROTTEN MOTHERFUCKING PROMOTERS, BOOKERS, CLUB OWNERS, ETC.

I've discussed these assholes before here in the pages of AMP. Since many of the situations I've written about occurred way back in the 80's some readers might accuse me of dwelling in the past. I can just hear some of them saying, "Get a life Whiskey Rebel!" The fact is, everyday ritual abuse of bands by pinprick promoters is just as common today as it ever was. The incredible glut of bands seem to lineup faster than ever to be reamed and ravaged. There have to be a jillion fucking songs by bands pointing out the evils of Republicans, teachers, preachers, parents, businessmen, yuppies, trendies of various types, etc. etc. WHY THE FUCK DO I SEEM TO BE the only guy from a band to write about snake in the grass promoters??

The latest son of a bitch we've dealt with has organized a chopper fest that (allegedly) will feature people from several big ass motorcycle industry dealers from across the U.S.A. One day several months ago, he walked into the tattoo shop our guitar player Mark works at stating he was sponsoring a big chopper fest...and asked who the good local bands were. To make a long story short, we were booked for the show after he approved of a CD we gave him. During the process of setting the gig up the guy promised Mark there would be limos filled with strippers to accompany the band members to San Antonio for a wild post show party. WOW.

IN RETROSPECT, THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE RED FLAG.

Yesterday...about 10 days before the show we realized we didn't know what time we needed to set up at the club, how long we needed to play and how much we were getting paid. Mark's third call to the guy was eventually picked up (surprisingly!). The guy said we'd be playing an hour...and that the bands were being paid by being ADMITTED FREE TO HIS FRIGGING EVENT.

WOW!! Imagine that. Being admitted free to a big gala show that your band is playing at.

WHO DID THIS GUY THINK HE WAS KIDDING??? I've never had to pay admission to any fucking show I've ever been part of. The guy cried that he was letting in the members of 20 bands...so there was obviously no money to be had.

The show will be held at a large public center and spill over to a couple different designated bars. Obviously, since he spent quite a deal of money on advertising there will be thousands of folks there....shelling out \$40 to gain admission for the weekend. If he sells 5,000 tickets the rev-

enue from the gate alone will be \$200,000.

And he's going to stiff the bands...cry financial hardship...like the booker in some suckass squat in Poland??

Of course, the security staff won't be working for free admission. The sound men that work with the bands will be paid....the bartenders will be paid...the waitresses serving drinks will be paid...the guy pushing the broom mopping up the glass bottles we smash during our set will be paid. A lot of expensive motorcycles will be sold...paying all those folks.

And...obviously, the promoter himself is planning on making a profit or he wouldn't be fantasizing out loud about limos jammed with strippers.

BUT...THE BANDS ARE SUPPOSED TO PLAY FOR FREE.

Why is this??? I've never met this fellow in person...but I think I can pretty safely assume he's quite a bit like the hordes of shady, manipulative and ultimately unsavory promoters and club owners I've dealt with in the past. Those cheating sons of bitches would fuck over bands because they recognize that there are so damn many run of the mill bands it's not hard to find dozens in any town willing to be "whores for a gig."

Rancid Vat doesn't always get paid a ton of money. Yeah...we've done better and better over the years since leaving Portland, Oregon, (the haven for more scumbag bookers/promoters than anywhere else in the U.S. besides L.A.) but there are still bad nights attendance wise when we will play for a pitiful amount of gas money. Luckily even the shittiest nights tend to bring in some reasonable dough from merchandise sales. Like other bands with self respect (more about this coming up) we don't make a practice of playing for free at a venue where a successful show is taking place. I didn't see Austin Harley enthusiast Dale Watson on the list of performing acts for the chopper fest. You've gotta cough up some money if you want him to play. I didn't see Junior Brown billed. I did see a lot of local band names representing LOCAL acts that are desperate and will play anywhere anytime to try to "make it" (whatever that fucking means).

Now, Rancid Vat sure as hell isn't in Dale Watson or Junior Brown's league...but neither are we a gaggle of beginners so desperate to play we don't mind getting ROYALLY RUMPED by a shyster promoter.

The local bands whether new and inexperienced or not might actually be paid fairly by this guy and his ilk if there WASN'T SO GODDAMNED MANY of them willing to give it away for free in hope of attracting some attention. We all know 90% of those bands will fold within a year. Then, they'll meet up with members of the other bands who have folded and reform with more up to the minute trendy material and an accompanying band name. Eventually, 99% of them will mature and quit playing music to profit bottom feeding promoters and go on to lead adult lives in the suburbs.

When they're gone...we'll be left; still feuding with and hating the fucking assholes who for almost a quarter century have been cheating us in the name of "promoting" music.

PROMOTING MY FUCKING ASS. Most music "promoters" I've met over the last quarter century would be more accurately described as "destroyers." My band isn't going to throw in the towel because we've run across another maggot booking asshole; but a lot of bands fold all the time because they're tired of being fucked around. Now I know as well as anybody that there's way too many bands out there that suck...and that we won't miss most of the bands that quit. It's damned likely though that along with a glut of worthless bands the world has lost an incredible

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amount of great music due to really talented people giving up because they're sick of being shit on.

You know, nothing makes me want to projectile vomit bile faster than when I see a bunch of clowns from bands standing around some booking asshole trying to kiss his or her ass in order to get some coveted opening slot for their band. Bookers do absolutely NOTHING for music. A lot of them are simply frustrated musicians looking for a way to force REAL musicians to tolerate being around them.

I know a lot of people who book shows across the country are reading this. Hey...to the minority of you bookers/promoters who actually give a shit about live music that this rant doesn't apply to....I almost love you all. I certainly respect you. It's too bad the vast majority of scene kingpin dickhead bookers give you few respectable ones a bad name.

You people in bands reading this...when are you gonna fucking wake up and quit groveling at the feet of the sneaky, lying, two faced bookers in your town??? Rather than you and people from other bands in your town competing to kiss up to these scumbags...wouldn't it be better if every time one of your bands got screwed out of some money or over billed for a damaged microphone...if a large group of you called the motherfucker on it?? Playing music isn't a "competition." Music...even 3 chord raw slop...is ART...like it or not. Bookers would like you to think that you're "competing" with other bands...but that's horseshit. Get together with other bands who've been fucked over...AND FUCK THE BASTARDS OVER IN RETURN. Fuck 'em over repeatedly...and fuck 'em over with pleasure. But remember, DON'T make threats to them that they can use to get you in legal trouble. GROW A PAIR OF BALLS. If they screw you over in a sneaky manner...SCREW 'EM OVER RIGHT BACK in a sneaky manner. If the club steals from you...STEAL SOMETHING BACK; of course...DON'T GET CAUGHT!!

I'm gonna repeat a prime rule you should follow when preparing to fuck over a promoter/booker/club owner in return. I can't say it enough: DON'T make verbal threats that can get you in trouble. Instead, calmly and with a smile on your face say something like this: "HEY _____ (fill in their name here) YOU LYING, TWO-FACED BASTARD...YOU FUCKED OVER ME AND MY BAND. THAT MEAN'S THAT YOU'VE ISSUED US AND ALL OUR FRIENDS A LICENSE TO FUCK WITH YOU FOREVER USING ANY DIRTY FUCKING TRICKS WE CAN THINK OF." When you're done saying this...just give them a little wave and walk away SMILING. Hey...it's TIME to smile...because the fact is when they fuck you over you have the rest of your life to GET BACK at them. Obviously for legal reasons I can't go into detail about things you can do that would amuse you and your band and your friends a helluva lot...while causing a lot of mental torment, anger and shame to the music "destroyer" leeches.

Of course when you do finally assert yourself and quit brown nosing for bookings your band is likely gonna lose the chance to play a couple times or so. When this happens...DO WHAT WE'VE DONE over the many years that I've been at odds with promoters. Put the night you were gonna play live to good use by recording the band either at a studio or in your basement using whatever means you have to do it. Believe me...it feels GREAT to be blasting out music on your own terms. You'll feel twice as proud of anything you record on these nights. Another option is to play for free at a party and loudly and repeatedly smear the name of the booker whose bunghole you've decided to quit licking.

There are probably a lot of readers reading this who've never played in

a band...and therefore have no goddamned idea what the hell I'm writing about. These people come and go from shows in total ignorance for the most part of anything happening behind the scenes apart from the music they hear and the beer they drink. Promoter maggots often seem like nice folks to music fans. Often the dirty cunts are praised in local music weekly rags as if they somehow deserve credit for a hot show.

HEY! WAKE UP!! In many, many cases the promoter is lying in wait to fuck over the artist you see performing on stage. I know a LOT of people from successful touring bands. Don't take my word for it...ask one in your town. I guarantee you ANY of them will tell you plenty of horror stories of what they've had to go through to get paid.

Don't be all that surprised if you hear conflicting reports on a particular promoter or club. Often they'll treat important touring acts very well and local bands like SHIT. Of course, true to form if the local band becomes famous someday...whose gonna be first in line claiming to have helped them when they were starting out??? YEP. ☛

DECEMBER ENTRY:

A FEW WORDS FOR THE "INFORMED"

I'm damn glad the election is over. I've had a fucking BELLYFUL of so called "informed" opinions from all sides. In case you've never had the chance to read one of my fine columns here in "AMP" before...suffice it to say that I'm a non-partisan, agnostic, satanic leaning functioning alcoholic who CAN'T FUCKING STAND organized religion...OR organized political groups who cram emotional notions into the heads of unsuspecting humanoids.

I think the world...including we here in the USA...would greatly benefit if a huge number of the scores of millions of sheep who blindly accept whatever partisan nonsense is ladled to them would observe thee WHISKEY REBEL's latest political ideology bullshit detector formula:

IF IT IS WISE TO QUESTION THE ULTERIOR MOTIVES OF POLITICIANS...IT'S EQUALLY WISE TO QUESTION THE HIDDEN AGENDA AND MOTIVES OF THOSE WHO CRITICIZE THEM.

This was an ugly election. I perceived an endless barrage of emotional political dogma from almost all sides routinely presented as "FACT." In other words, intellectually it smelled more like a HOLY ROLLER Wednesday night prayer meeting than a reasoned political campaign. It's understandable that folks make their religious "decisions" based on emotions...since no religion can be proven logically. I don't know about you...but I don't think it's a good thing when masses of people begin to offer up their political "souls" based on emotional decisions.

Whether you're a lefty or a righty...you may think that Rush Limbaugh and Michael Moore have little in common; AH HAH!!!! That's my point! They're both partisan guys who bend cold "logic" to forge a hot emotional appeal for their fans. For better or worse each of these guys swayed a lot of voters into their respective camps based on emotion appeals presented as "FACTS."

Again, I'm not saying whose right or wrong between those two on any specific points of debate...I'm saying they're BOTH WITHOUT DOUBT PURELY BIASED. If you can't see what they have in com-

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mon...you've likely been blindly sucked into one side. If you're happy accepting on faith what your "side" wants you to believe, that's your choice. Don't pretend that you've made some sort of objective choice based on being "informed."

I've heard several commentators speculate that our country is more polarized opinion wise than any time in recent memory; I don't know about that. It's damn sure though that I can't remember another campaign in my life time during which so many people attempted to talk my fucking ear off about partisan allegations that they assumed were true based on "faith" rather than any clear evidence.

It's a matter of individual judgment where the fine line falls between well meaning minor partisan "spin" and outright lying. Yeah, it's human nature to bend the facts a bit to support your "side." It's scary to think how many people are convinced their political or religious side is pure and holy and doesn't "lie."

C'mon now...EVERYBODY LIES. From the frigging pope to beggars in the street. Cops and cop haters. Teachers and students. From murderous socio-paths like Ted Bundy...to your sweetest, most seemingly innocent, lovable old coot relative. They just lie in different ways and for different reasons.

I devoted many years out of my life to lying for a living as a professional salesman. I routinely lied on a daily...hell, HOURLY basis. I wasn't ashamed of my lies...since they fattened my wallet. I was damned PROUD of a particularly well executed one in fact. Seniors and younger people under 25 or so I found were the easiest to lie to.

When I was selling binoculars at a large retail store during the Christmas season many years ago I once bragged to my boss that I could sell any particular brand of binoculars at will; it wasn't the customer who decided what individual brand to buy...it was ME. I proved this by pointing to a certain brand declaring I'd sell the entire stock before selling any others. He smiled and stood back to watch my efforts. Over the next few days I sold out that stack...and picked out another brand to sell next. My boss eventually admitted that I was indeed the one making the decisions...NOT the consumer. How did I pull it off?? I'd simply play to the emotions of the customer. When I was selling to old farts I'd get a couple different brands out on the display case for them to look at. I'd gaze across the room for 20 or 30 seconds...and then suddenly "remember" out loud that brand "A" was the model that "we bought for Grandma so she could look at the pretty birds in her yard." Old farts are sentimental fools; 9 times out of 10 the old fossils would ask me how my Grannie liked her gift...and I'd always smile and nod obviously oozing with warm fuzzy goodness...BEAMING with joy. Well, that was usually the end of the sell. I don't recall anybody ever questioning the truth of my story about Grandma. The fact was OF COURSE that I hadn't been in contact with any of my Grandmothers in years.

I proved my point to that boss...but I didn't make much money at that job. I did pretty well selling water heaters at Sears in Southern California though (at a store in North Hollywood) in the late 1980's. I worked alongside piss poor salespeople who spent a lot of time gassing about technical nonsense. When I was working a customer I'd always remember to focus first on ANY WEAKNESS I could detect. Generally speaking the best way to close a sale immediately when dealing with senior citizen old coots was to suggest that A) they shop around with some competitors (I'd recommend a few of the worst ones) and then B) I'd give them one of my business cards and tell them to call me right away in case their present old water heater began LEAKING. That of course was a way of pretending to be concerned while preying on old people's common concern for SAFETY. Lots of folks who'd never considered up to that moment their water heater might spring a leak...flooding their precious home...decided

on the spot to buy. Of course, I wasn't done with them until I sold them an expensive installation, too. I would do that by: C) instead of making it look like I was pushing an installation sale on them...I'd sidestep the subject by warning them that "whoever in your family installs your water heater had best be careful...an improperly installed unit could explode. That line wouldn't work on a middle-aged "do it yourselfer"...nor would it work on young people on a slim budget. It SURE WORKED on those lovable seniors though!

I could sell specific models to young people by merely suggesting that one was more environmentally efficient. Wary middle aged folks in their "prime" were the toughest sells. The best method for me was a convenient one. My co-workers all wore suits and nice dresses and had pristine hairdo's; in other words...they looked like professional SALESPeOPLE. They scared off a lot of alert shoppers. But me...I'd wear the cheapest slacks and white shirt I could find...topped with a thrift store tie and the sort of home made haircut you'd expect from a drunk who played in a band. I didn't "look" like a salesman. I didn't greet them like a salesman would either. I'd carry a screwdriver around occasionally flipping it in the air...as if I was in the middle of repairing something (!!! that'll be the day...that I repair anything!!). Instead of greeting customers with a transparent line like: "May I help you?" I'd smile and say something like..."If you have any questions folks...I'm right over in the next aisle." I'd turn to walk away...as if I meant it. 9 times out of 10 the customer would stop me and ASK me for help or information before I got 5 feet away. Of course, customers may have THOUGHT they were selecting a particular model...but that was determined in truth by ME...before they ever walked into the store. I'd usually push the model that was on sale to speed up the transaction and get on to another customer...but if we were low on inventory for that item I'd push another model subtly that I knew we had in stock. Sometimes I'd invent factoids on the spot about what "consumer reports" had to say about a couple models.

Don't think for a minute that only salespeople at department stores pull this sort of shit on you. Doctors routinely use emotional scare tactics to get people to try new medications (they receive sales perk rewards ranging from coffee mugs to toaster ovens to cash bonuses for their efforts). The "homeless" beggar guy regularly based during drive time at Stassney and I-35 up in Austin who looks like Willie Nelson (nice touch!!) is a damned effective enough salesman that he wears nicer clothes and boots than I've owned in years.

It doesn't matter whether it's a highly trained liar selling cars at your local dealership or the hookers pushing their wares or the rep from the United Way soliciting employee contributions down at your job...or maybe ME parked at a table selling CD's and T-shirts at one of my bands shows...we ALL have something to sell. We all will lie to some extent...and all play upon your emotions.

It's a matter of opinion which pitchmen are "respectable" and which ones are sleaze balls. The most successful ones can eventually be rolling in dough...like Limbaugh and Moore...like Sharpton and Falwell...like Howard Stern and Dr. Laura...like Kerry and Bush.

HOT DAMN!! It'd be great to join the millionaires club along with all those folks. I've been hoping all my life I could find some thing or someone to sell out...but I guess I'm just stuck being a fucking agnostic, non-partisan, satanic leaning functioning alcoholic loser. SHIT.

THEE WHISKEY REBEL: whskyreb@centurytel.net or: P.O.Box 1781 San Marcos, Tx. 78666

Visit the Whiskey Rebel online diary: <http://www.WhiskeyRebel.com>

SATURDAY LOOKS GOOD TO ME



By John Everhart

Saturday Looks Good to Me are the best band in Michigan that doesn't live in Detroit. Actually, they're the best band in Michigan period, and are currently my favorite band in the world. 2003's *All Your Summer Songs* was an absolutely gorgeous record, the sound of rough hewn Velvet Underground gnashed through static-laden, inscrutable 60s AM radio melodies. The album completely floored me. It had a sound seemingly impervious to time, meaning it sounded like it could have been recorded at any point between the mid 60s and now, a quality so many great records (Bee Thousand, *Murmur*) possess. It seemingly came out of nowhere, released on a label I thought was exclusively emo (and have since been proven wrong, as Polyvinyl continues to branch out successfully, recently signing NYC slow core favorites *Ida*). Ostensibly a collection of breakup anthems, *Summer Songs* also struck a delicate balance, simultaneously celebrating and mourning the nature of loss. It also contemplated gentrification and our relation to social issues broader than mundane interpersonal relationships, often tying them together, never denigrating either.

Every Night surges forward with a greater sense of urgency, augmenting the tracks with weightier hooks and more assertive playing that more closely approximates the act's live experience, whatever that is. None of

the melody is sacrificed, thankfully, and male vocalist/songwriter/band leader Fred Thomas has improved his singing considerably, sounding significantly more confident and assertive on the five or so tracks he sings lead

on. I spoke to the often droll, always hilarious and engaging Thomas before the band's show at the Abbey Pub in Chicago.

Two versions, vinyl and CD. What was the impetus?

I want to preface this by saying that it really isn't that big of a deal, it's not that great of an idea, it's not something a bunch of people haven't done before and I didn't think it was going to be the main focus of what the record was all about. When I sent Polyvinyl the mastered tapes, I was like here's the LP version, here's the CD version. Ha, ha, ha. Funny. Maybe someone will buy the record and be like this song sucks and someone else will say this song rules and it'll be a completely different song. So there wasn't that much of an impetus other than the fact that this band always has a lot of different members and a lot of different versions of recordings of songs. It might make more sense than putting out colored vinyl. It got pushed more into a focus of like this is a cool innovative idea. The Stooges had like four or five different mixes

of Funhouse. Every time it got repressed there was a different mix. It's definitely a cool thing but not something I thought was that big of a deal. We had extra versions and couldn't decide so we just put both of them.

Do you have a preference?

I really like some of the mixes on the LP. The song "Keep Walking" sounds gritty on the vinyl, and I like the acoustic version of "When the Party Ends," not more than the other, but I like that it's really clear and it has strings.

I prefer the LP version.

That seems to be the consensus.

Unfortunately it's not as convenient to listen to.

It's the crux of the human condition. (laughs)

Who were the vocalists this time?

The last record (*All Your Summer Songs*) we had so many guests that I just gathered around randomly. Like Ted Leo sang, some people from *Ida* sang. This time we really wanted to present this as the band people see live. Betty does most of the female vocals, Kelly Caldwell sings on *Lift Me Up*. Cho from *The Knockouts* sings a song. The vocalists were less a recording project and more a part of our circle of conspirators.

How did you approach this recording differently from *All Your Summer Songs*?

The last record was such a dense an every instrument all the time, very heavily arranged while this is more of a live vibe. A lot of the songs were recorded all in one take live. Live vocals, live strings, live everything. Just a room sound with mics in a room and the band. Previous records have been me, my four track and some dude I just met jamming on drums and that kind of becomes a song, but these were at least moderately practiced songs. This is just different. The four track sound is put aside for a more live thing.

Are you still living in Detroit?

Couldn't get a job in Detroit. And, you know, it's not for everybody.

You lived in New York City for awhile, right?

I lived in NY for about four weeks. It sucked. It was really cold. I stayed in my car for a couple of those weeks. I've come back to Ann Arbor, where most of the people in the band are from, where the Stooges are from, where the MC5 are from.

How did Betty Marie Barnes (new female vocalist) end up in the band?

We had mutual friends, and we started writing on Friendster. Like, "hi, how are you doing? I see that you like The Kinks." Then we started meeting in



public and then in private. A lot of mail correspondence all the while, more post cards and letters than ever really calling. A time of many stamps.

Can you talk about Warn Defever's (His Name is Alive) involvement on the record?

He was the engineer and did a slide guitar solo on this record. Warn's favorite thing to do is remind me how much I rip off *His Name is Alive* Songs. During the solo I kind of did the sound of the solo for him, and before he actually recorded it he pointed out to me which *His Name is Alive* song I ripped it off from. I didn't think I actually did, but he morphed it into it (laughs). People pull the *His Name is Alive* card, and I'm like, "dude, we lived in the same house for awhile. We used the same equipment, the same guitars. We grew up in Michigan, went to the same college, had the same life experiences." It kind of makes sense that there's some similarities in sonic approach. I was in the band (HNIA) for a long time. But what were doing is so different, especially right now. It's less dorky, and more reaching. I mean we don't have songs about Abraham Lincoln or Santo and Johnny. I'd feel really bad if we made "Stars on ESP" part 2.

How did it go recording the record?

We did a week in Warn's studio and

two weeks in my house. The day we went to record in my house the heat went out and it was super cold and that kind of informs the psychosis of the live tracks. Some stuff's like happy ass Saturday Looks Good To Me and others are more, ahhhh it's freezing. This is a happy song by a completely depressed crazy human being sleeping on the couch of a neighbor and working like sixteen days in the studio and eating peanut butter because he spent his entire life's savings on this album. So you can kind of catch the desperation on this one, a lot different from the subtle depression on past releases.

Are you happiest with this record?

It's hard to choose a favorite child, but I do think this is the best album Saturday Looks Good to Me has written.

I'm not even sure exactly how many records you've done...

This is the third album. I feel like there were some CDRs that happened, but I don't think those are albums. It's really shitty to be like, 'we made 100 copies of in a week that's 20 minutes long that we sold at a show in Detroit to our friends, ha ha, you can't have it.' They're music, they're songs, they existed, but I think of an album as like going home to listen to *Houses of the Holy*. That's an album. CDRs are more like coda, a

collection of scraps. Four track songs I did in a day. It doesn't sound anything like anything. All the worthwhile songs on those recordings have found a place on a major release.

Are you conscious of having an audience now? Does that have an effect on the songwriting process?

We count thirty more people. Primarily I have to think of this band as not really having an audience. Because who's listening? I don't know anyone, a band like Faghat or the Strokes, they might have to think about what their record sounds like. I don't want to make the same record twice. Some people think this record sounds just like the last one. I think progress and development are the most important things. I was sick with nervousness about how different it was. At the time of the recording I couldn't eat for weeks because I was like, 'it's so different, it's so produced, it sounds like OutKast, it sounds like Mandy Moore.' To me, you go from four tracks to eight tracks and that's double the tracks. I think it's a great album and a total development and I can't wait for the next one because this time we have no surplus songs. No songs on CDRs, so it's really exciting to see what develops.

Ultimately, what are you trying to convey through making records?

We've been thinking about our mis-

sion for a long time. This band started out as a recording project. It was a total accident. Ben Bracken left a tape of a Beach Boys loop on a four track, and I put drums over it. The next thing I know we're sitting here. That was in 1999. We played our first show in 2001. We started off as an accident. There have been so many people in and out of this band. So many people have lent their talents to tape, to a live show, or to artwork or a poster, or just really appreciating a certain lyric or song. I feel like everybody's a part of that band. We wanted to expand on that by expressing.... It's just really a time of confusion and non-acceptance and beleaguered bewilderment in general and we want to We want to express as much love and joy to everyone in the universe, everything in the universe. Maybe that sounds a little hokey or a little hyperbolic, but really it's all you can do. You can be someone who's negative and holding on to anger and resentment or you can let it go and live in joy as an example or just for yourself. I want to be happy as much as I can. I might die tomorrow. I've felt really close to death sometimes and it's a bad, bad feeling. I've spent the last year of my life feeling really panicked and sad and hurt. There's no real time for that. We have a chance to communi-

cate with a lot of people. Whether it's 20 people or 5000 people or 32 people, we have a chance to communicate with the public, to put something out to the cosmos, so we'll put something that's the least selfish, most joyful, most full of love message that you can, and that's what we're trying to do with this tour, and this new record. We're trying to express that love and that concept of understanding to the universe.

I asked Fred during the interview what his favorite songs were from "Every Night" and to tell a story about them. He said all twelve were his favorites, and proceeded to tell a story about each.

"Since You Stole My Heart" This one rips off the Velvet Underground's "Who Loves the Sun" and a song by the Dixie Cups called "I'm Gonna Get You Yet." We tried to mash the two of them together. If you listen to any Shangri-Las songs there's a delay on the drums half way through. That was stolen for this song.

"Until the World Stops Spinning" A blatant Belle & Sebastian rip off. About secret cities under the earth's surface and Erika Hoffman (Godzuki) sings it. It's also about walking around thinking you're cool at some show wearing a stupid ass jacket

thinking it looks cool but it actually doesn't and everyone knows you're full of shit, but we try to hide that in a happy song. We mixed it to sound like "Hey Ya" by OutKast because the beat is exactly the same.

"Keep Walking" We wanted this to sound like The Sonics but it doesn't sound like anything really.

"All Over Town" The first song Betty sang. I'd never heard her sing before. We recorded it in my basement. It's a song about when you think you have a girlfriend but she's really not your girlfriend and has 8 or 9 other boyfriends, which happens all the time strangely enough.

"The Girl's Distracted" One of the first songs written for the album about a girl that's totally distracted. The string breakdown is my favorite moment which sounds like a Tommy Roe album where all the strings in the world are doing this ridiculous all over the place thing.

"If You Ask" A complete Zombies rip off start to finish. Juan Garcia from Grand Rapids recorded a slide guitar solo. About when someone asks you a question that you don't want to answer but you have you answer it even though the answer might be bad, and you can be sad about the answer or move on with your life.

"Empty Room" Koe sang this one.

Originally titled "Kinks Jam." It had a Kinks vibe. We'd spent the entire day before we recorded going to pawn shops trying to recover a bunch of stuff a friend of hers staying at her house had stolen from her, so it's sort of about trying to figure out who you can trust.

"When The Party Ends" One of the first songs written for the record. It's the transition from when SLGTM went from being a blatant Beach Boys wannabe Happy Days band to being a weird band. I can't say enough about this song, so I won't say anything about it.

"Dialtone" This is about communication in the modern age and trying to understand communication and friendship and love. It's the most Jonathan Richman sounding we've gotten, which is a good thing.

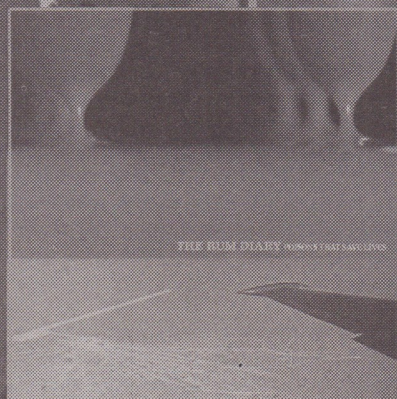
"We Can't Work it Out" A song about drunkenness, driving drunk, people making mistakes.

"Lift Me Up" We changed because it sounded too much like "Alcohol." We used to play them back to back and it was depressing, so we changed the lyrics and the melody. Kelly Caldwell sings it. She's totally great.

"When You Got to New York" - My favorite because it's not like anything else, and it has a really beautiful string part and accordion part, and it's sweet, it's very sweet. ☺

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BANDS AND THEIR VANS



AN INTERVIEW WITH SAM FROM FOREKNOWN

LET'S GET STARTED WITH SOME QUICK QUESTIONS BEFORE WE EXPLORE THE INNER-WORKINGS OF YOUR VAN.

NAME: Sam Dean
BAND NAME: Foreknown
VAN NAME: Big Red
MAKE: Ford
MODEL: Econoline 150
YEAR: 1993

DOES THE BAND HAVE ANY INTERESTING MODIFICATIONS, I.E. LOFT, BIGGER ENGINE, DIAMOND WINDOWS, FANCY PAINT? DID YOU DO THEM?

We modified her all right. We took the thermostat out so it didn't overheat in the summer. We were then were too lazy to put it back in before winter, which caused us to have no heat whatsoever. Being that we live in Minnesota this became a huge problem. The Solution was blankets and a fair amount of "man cuddle time."

WHERE DID YOU GET IT?

We bought it for \$3500 and picked it up at an Every Time I Die and Hopesfall show in Minneapolis that we were neither playing nor attending. We test drove the van and then had to drive the previous owner 6 hours back to South Dakota. On the way back we got high winds and almost drove her off the road.

IS THERE ANY HISTORY BEHIND THE VAN?

Prior to us owning her, she had belonged to Nick and Jake from Nodes of Ranvier (Facedown Records). The van was used for their previous bands touring endeavors.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD IT?

We've had her for 9 wonderful months.

WHERE HAVE YOU TAKEN IT ON TOUR?

All through the Midwest and East coast.

HOW MANY MILES HAVE YOU PUT ON IT?

50,000 in 9 months.

WHERE DO YOU PLAN ON TAKING IT (UP-COMING TOURS)?

Well, being that she is no longer with us. We must continue on without her.

IS THERE A DRIVER IN THE BAND, I.E. THE ONE WHO IS ALWAYS BEHIND THE WHEEL? WHO? WHY?

There are five of us in the band, and only Seth,



Winter and I really drive. Alan has been known to, but only once in a while.

CAN/DO ALL OF YOU SLEEP IN THE VAN?

We will not lie. There have been many times that we have slept in a Wal Mart parking lot. All of us finding the most comfortable place, but often resorting to "Man Cuddle Time".

ANY INTERESTING SLEEPING STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, I.E. DREAMS, SEX, ETC.?

When we flipped the van, everyone was sleeping except Seth (shotgun), and me (driver). We had our heads in the van to protect the tubes from the cold, and when that van started-a-rolling those things probably did more damage than anything, including hitting Winter in the face. Nolan was sleeping through the whole ordeal, but when it all came to an end he came to standing straight up.

DO YOU OR ANYONE IN THE BAND DO THE MAINTENANCE? IF SO, TO WHAT EXTENT?

Seth does the most, just due to knowledge of automobiles. Both Winter and I have from time to time got our hands dirty, and had to help Seth.

TELL ME ABOUT THE WORST VAN RELATED HORROR STORY, I.E. FIRE, ACCIDENT, HIT A DEER, ETC.

Without a doubt, the worst thing was "The Accident". It was the brisk night of December 18th 2003. We had just played in Iowa with Haste The Day and our friends Begin Again. Seth decided to drive the first shift and drove all the way to Minneapolis, where we switched drivers at a gas station. I was the new driver, and as I drove I noticed that it was misting outside. The water was

just enough to be annoying, but was not freezing. We drove for about 45 minutes, and the windows began to freeze up. We had passed a very slow moving car and kept on going at the speed limit. About 30 seconds later the van slides to the right and I immediately take off the cruise control and try to slow down. I was too late. We jerk to the left with the trailer behind us fishtailing around. The van comes completely around, and the passenger side tires hit the dirt of the median causing the van to go into 3 full flips. With no one wearing a seat belt, no one is lands quite where they were. I was now in Seth's lap pressed against the front passenger window. Other than a few bruises and my broken thumb we were all fine. All except for poor Big Red. Her windshield now being used as the main door to exit into the cold Minnesota night, we knew her time had come.

DOES THE BAND HAVE ANY VAN RULES? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEY?

We never really had one. Now it is DON'T FLIP THE VAN.

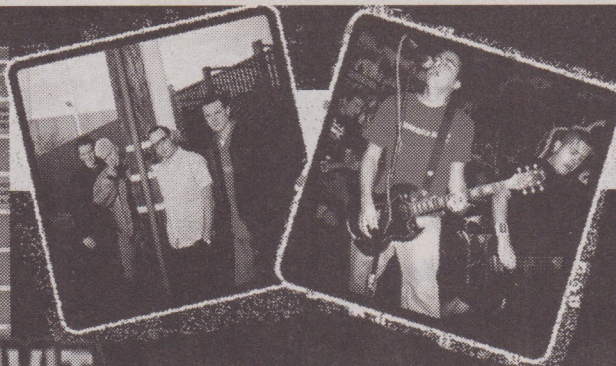
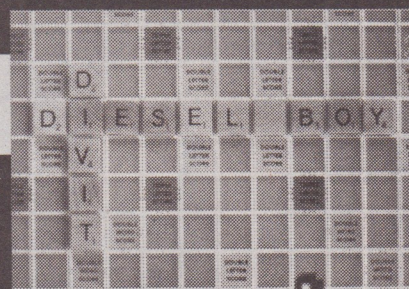
ANY ADVICE FOR THOSE BANDS WHO DON'T HAVE A VAN AND ARE LOOKING TO BUY ONE?

Look for old delivery vans, they are really well kept up and have been serviced constantly since they were bought. Not to mention they're dirt cheap.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DREAM VAN?

Alan has a weak bladder, so a pisser would make any van unbeatable.

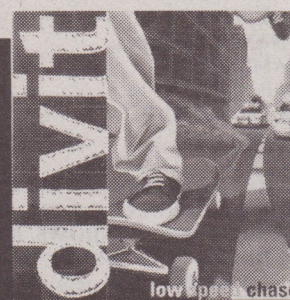
For more info about The Fight, visit:
www.foreknownrock.com



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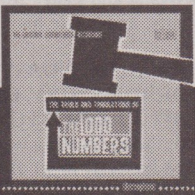
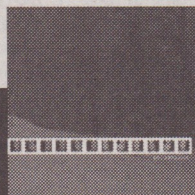
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Brandtson



An Interview With Vocalist/Guitarist Myk Porter

By John McKay

The prospect of bands getting fresh starts is not uncommon in the indie scene. Countless bands throw out a few forgettable releases and then suddenly decide to shift gears, putting out an overly artistic album that goes over the heads of their primary fanbase. For Brandtson, however, this is not the case. After five releases on Deep Elm Records (*Planes Mistaken For Stars*, *The Appleseed Cast*) since 1998, which provided few results, Brandtson, now armed with a new record deal with The Militia Group (*Copeland*, *The Beautiful Mistake*), and a spirited, well-rounded album. Yes, things are finally starting to look promising for the not-as-young-as-when-they-started lads of Brandtson. However, unlike many of their indie/emo peers, Brandtson didn't require a complete aesthetic makeover – or any member changes – to finally find their spot on the forefront of the emo scene.

The band's latest album, *Send Us A Signal*, keeps with the same formula Brandtson has utilized ever since they broke into the scene with *Letterbox* just over six years ago. While the hooks are a bit more polished, and the vocals a bit more refined, this is the same Brandtson that has inexplicably remained below the

surface of the indie scene throughout the past half-decade. Brandtson are finally getting their due.

You guys have a new album out, *Send Us A Signal*, on The Militia Group, after a lengthy stint on Deep Elm Records. One thing I noticed about the record is that it seemed like you guys

had a lot more time to work on it.

Yeah, we definitely did. When we started talking to The Militia Group, they kind of asked us what we would need to make this happen, to work with them. That was one of the big things for us, we really wanted to have a good amount of time in the studio. In the past we were always totally under the gun and very rushed, and had very minimal time to do everything. It was a big deal for us. I guess more than anything, we wanted more time to explore different ideas than in the past, where it was like, "Okay, let's try this," but we didn't really have the time to work it out. It was really nice to have that time this time around and to be able to say, "What if we tried this?" and actually try it. If it worked, we could keep it or tweak it a little bit, and if it didn't work, at least we tried it.

Would it be safe to say that, prior to this release, your EPs always sounded a little more complete than your LPs?

I think that's definitely fair to say. I think that was just because of our time constraints,



and how we're used to writing together. But it was always a process of "Okay, we need ten songs for a record, let's write them" and we would finish a song and move on, whereas this time, it was more like, "Okay, this is a new start, we need to make the absolute best record that we're capable of making, and the best record that we've ever made. Period." So we really worked a lot more on the songwriting, whereas in the past, we would finish a song, and so long as we were fairly happy with it, we'd move on to the next song. So yeah, I could definitely see that, where the EPs would be a little more solid, due to the fact that they were shorter, and the full-lengths, I could see dragging on a little bit, again, because of the time constraints, and the amount of time we put into writing. When there's four or five more songs on a record, it can drag on a bit more, whereas the EPs are just kind of quick and there.

I've seen you guys at the Shelter (Detroit) a couple times before, and I've talked to you there, and you mentioned that, when you did your last album, *Dial In Sounds*, you didn't even get a full day to work on each song. How did you (producer) Ed Rose work around those time constraints in the studio? We would always record demo versions of the songs before we went into the studio, and we would send those to Ed, so he could kind of get an idea of what we were doing, and what the songs sounded like. He would offer his input, like "Let's cut this part in half" and "Let's change this part," or whatever his ideas were. It was always like, "Okay, here are the song structures, let's go in and do them." We would spend a day or two doing the drums, and then move on to the bass. We'd do bass for a day, then do the guitars. We'd spend a day or day and a half doing all the guitars for the whole record, and it never left room for (trying new things), it was always like, we'd just get things done and move on, basically taking what we had on the demos, leaving parts mostly as-is, focus-

ing on getting a good sound more than anything. This time around, there was a whole lot of re-writing. We had the demos done, and a day before we left for the studio, Ed Rose had e-mailed us a full two pages of changes he wanted to make to the songs. Once we got there and started working on everything, there was a lot of stuff we changed this time around. In the past, it was always just getting in there and getting everything down as fast as we could, and just get it done.

So now you have a new record deal with The Militia Group. Do you feel that people might be more aware of what's going on with you guys, and you might be promoted a bit more? I certainly hope so. We have really high expectations for this record, and for working with The Militia Group. Those guys have been super-supportive of us. They even supported us before had even signed with them. On the (Deep Elm Records) "Too Young To Die" tour, our van broke down the day before we left, and they helped us out with renting a van so that we could do that tour. We hadn't even fully considered working with them at that point. Just stuff like that, they've been very supportive of us. I think we all have high expectations, I think they do, too. We're kind of the oldest band on their roster, as in we've been doing this a long time, and they've sunk a whole lot of money into this record and into us as a band, and I think they want to make some of that back. We have a publicist for this record, whereas at Deep Elm all the publicity was in-house. There's a lot of issues of *Alternative Press* that were shipped with a Militia Group sampler that had a couple of our songs on it, and that sort of stuff we've never had before.

So it's almost like you're starting over again... Yeah, definitely. We've sort of looked at it that way. It's like, okay, this is a new start. We've been doing this for so long, but it's always been the same formula. We've

really pushed ourselves in a lot of different ways, as far as the writing, and as far as the recording process, and just as far as how we approached the band, as if we were starting over, and it was really refreshing.

Despite staying under the radar all these years, you do have a pretty devoted fan base. Do you think you'll win over a whole new batch of fans with this record?

I really hope so. I don't know what to expect. From our perspective, this record is so much different from our past records. But at the same time, I've listened to it and thought that it sounds cleaner and a little more polished than the old records, but sounds like us. It's not like we completely changed our style. It's not like we put out a record where we sound like Radiohead or something. I think that we won't be isolating anyone who likes us, and hopefully some more people find out about us and enjoy the record. I don't get my hopes up for that stuff, that's not why any of us do this band, not by any means. I don't think we'd be doing this for so long if our motive was just to become the next huge band. If anything like that happened, it would be totally awesome, but we don't count on any of that stuff.

How have your hometown (Cleveland) fans reacted to Brandtson signing to The Militia Group and whatnot?

Hopefully that will go over well. We haven't played Cleveland since right after Christmas. We played right before we went into the studio, played some new songs, and that was a really awesome show. We sort of slowed down on playing Cleveland so much, because it had gotten to the point where we were playing once a month, maybe twice a month. For a while it was really good, but then the shows started to suffer as a result. Then we had so much stuff going on with us going into the studio. We took some time off from doing any shows, because we really had to learn how to play this whole record. There were so many things we changed in the studio, we had to re-learn a lot of the songs. We always have a really good time playing Cleveland, though.

Brandtson have always been a real do-it-yourself band. You guys do your own website and your own artwork a lot of times.

I'm a little bit of a control freak. Not totally, I'm always open to other ideas and trusting other people with stuff. But it always comes down to stuff getting done, so we tend to not wait around for someone else to do it. If it needs to get done, we just do it. That's come through with our booking and our artwork. I do our website. I enjoy doing a lot of that stuff, so it gives me an outlet for doing some stuff. It's nice to be able to update the website whenever I feel like it or whenever we have something to say. We don't have to e-mail it to someone else and wait for them to post it. It's nice to cut out as many middlemen as possible.

www.brandtson.com
www.themilitiagroup.com

AMP MUSIC REVIEWS **SOUNDSCAPE**

Reviewers: (MC) Mitchy-Poo Cardwell, (RK) Ramsey Kanaan, (STM) Sammy The Mick, (JC) Jimi Cheeta, (DM) The Reverend Dominic Moresi, (LD) Laura Davis, (FM) Falin Minoru, (MWB) Matt "Windbreaker" Cote, (AW) Alan Wright, (TT) Tars Tarkas.

4FT FINGERS

"A Cause For Concern" CD

Third release from these UK skate-punks. It's really good too: inventive, melodic, and harmonic. Reminds me a lot of NO USE FOR A NAME's "Leche Con Carne". It's that good. Well worth hunting down. (RK)
(Go Kart Records / www.gokartrecords.com)

7-10 SPLIT

"Kill The Messenger" CD

4th full length, I believe. A stellar production. And a bit of everything - some hardcore, a bit of emo-anst, a dash of metal, some layered harmonies. Other than being geared for 'alternative' radio, it unfortunately doesn't stand out at all. Oh well. (RK)
(New School Records / www.newschoorecords.com)

800 OCTANE

"Rise Again" CD

13 rockin tracks. 800 run the gamut from ANTI-FLAG to NO USE FOR A NAME to the MISFITS, and do it all with some energy and style. If that isn't enough, my disc came with a bonus (?) live CD too! (RK)
(New School Records / www.newschoorecords.com)

ACTION

"Self-titled" CD

Spiky, aggressive, anarcho-punk. Very much in the vein of CONFLICT, VARUKERS, CRUCIFIX, RIISTEYTY et al....except they're from Canada. Debut LP, but they don't embarrass the legions of bands painted on their leather jackets. Some of the CONFLICT bits are a bit obvious, but imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, right?.....(RK)
(PunkCore Records / www.punkcore.com)

THE AFFECT

"Secrets & Lies" CD

This falls into the category of new dance bands wrapped in punk clothes. Lots of keyboards & beats for the dance floor. Very similar to THE FAINT, RAPTURE, & INTERPOL. Will probably appeal to that crowd. (LD) (www.hitchhiker-records.com)

AGAINST ME!

"We're Never Going Home" DVD

This is what every music DVD should be. It's not just some shitty live footage, a few videos, and crappy extras - it's a documentary. Following the band along their entire Spring 2004 tour with PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS and NO CHOICE, the film allows you to experience the tour as the



band does - which for the most part is in a drunken state. You get to watch first-hand as every major label around does their best to steal their souls

and own AGAINST ME! You'll also get to see Tom lock TAKING BACK SUNDAY in their dressing room, which is fucking hilarious. Plenty of bonus features and plenty of live footage, too. This is an incredible DVD. Go buy it. Now. Seriously. (MWB)
(www.fatwreck.com)

AGNOSTIC FRONT

"Another voice" CD

Come on, it's AF! If you don't know what's up, you have no business whatsoever (yeah, I'm talking to you dorks at Ozzfest who think the sun rises and sets with PTW) reading this magazine. The Godfathers return with another classic. While it ain't Victim In Pain, it's still waaaay more core than half the weak shit out there today. (STM)
(www.nuclearblast.com)

JULIUS AIRWAVE

"Dragons Are the New Pink" CD

A nice little indie-rock record with lots of poppy elements. Sounds like puberty - that uncertain honesty with the fear of

heartbreak & humiliation. Good songwriting that isn't interested in looks or image. (LD)
(www.sickroomrecords.com)

ALL PARALLELS

"Formulate a Tragedy" CD

Well the PR boasts that they sound like WEEZER & QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, a strange combination. I just found their moldy style of rock to be annoying and trite. Not recommended. (LD)
(On The Rise / PO Box 2471 / Westfield, NJ 07091)

AMERICAN PRINCESS

"Little Spaces" CD

This one's a stinker and here's why. You can't rely on cliched terms about rock n' roll to make you a hit. This is lukewarm and lame. I was disappointed cuz I'd heard good things about this Little Rock, AR label. Maybe next time. Only highlight: track 4 called "In the Dark" reminds me of BILLY BRAGG. (LD)
(www.maxrecordings.com)

ANNIHILATION TIME

self-titled CD

Didn't I just review this a few months ago? I'm sure I did! Whatever. What you have here is an awesome album of hardcore kids playing classic West Coast hardcore (from when the word punk could still be attached to the word hardcore without shame). Cross your new schoolers like INTERNAL AFFAIRS and IN CONTROL with your classics like BLACK FLAG and CH3 and BLAST (STM)
(www.manicriderrecords.com)

ANTI-FLAG

"Death of a Nation" DVD

I honestly think that ANTI-FLAG is one of the most important bands to ever come out of the punk rock scene. This band does more to promote their views, their causes, and their ideas than any other band. This DVD brings the live ANTI-FLAG experience to the masses, with 23 tracks, including all the hits. Plenty of special features, too, including music videos, interviews, and behind the scenes tour footage. Like you'd expect, they've got information on their causes and links to activism propaganda as well. If for some reason, you're not still pissed about the outcome of this past month's election, watch this video and hopefully you'll remember why we're all fucked with that sick motherfucker in office. (MWB)
(www.a-frecords.com)

ATHENS BOYS CHOIR

"Rhapsody In T" CD

Spoken word? Slam poetry? Righteous queer invasion? All this, and a whole lot more, courtesy of ROCKET and KATZ. Strap on, and get ready for a riotous ride of the mind - skewering all the right topics (and several of the wrong ones) with wit, passion, rhythm and rhyme. (RK)
(Daemon Records / www.daemonrecords.com)

THE AUTUMN OFFERING

"Revelations Of The Unsung" CD

While everyone and their mother is trying to paint their metal a special color (metalcore, fashioncore, screamo, blah blah blah) and bands like this comes along and just kicks it out with no bullshit. If it looks metal and sounds metal, bitch, it's metal. And these dudes deliver the goods with raging modern metal goodness along the lines of KSE, LAMB OF GOD, and SHADOWS FALL. (STM)
(www.stillborn.com)

BAMBIX

"What's In A Name" CD

Not sure why Daemon Records brought this gem back to life, but I'm real glad they did. Daemon is the label founded by Amy Ray of the INDIGO GIRLS. They tend to focus on female-oriented bands and singer / songwriters, but the closest they've come to punk to date is the BUTCHIES backing Amy Ray's solo efforts. BAMBIX are certainly dominated by the incredible vocals and axework of Willia van Houdt. And they're Dutch. And they sing in English. While musically they are a far cry from the REPLACEMENTS, the timbre and catch of Willia's voice reminds me a lot of PAUL WESTERBERG. Musically, they excel in speedy, melodic

punk with incredibly catchy rhythms and melodies. They mix it up like a less metallic JINGO DE LUNCH and LIFE....BUT HOW TO LIVE IT. Actually, listening to this for the tenth time in the last couple of days, I do hear spots of the REPLACEMENTS and HUSKER DU in there. They are that good. And you should get this. For sure. (RK)
(Daemon Records / PO Box 1207 / Decatur, GA 30031 / www.daemonrecords.com)

BAMBIX

"Crossing Common Borders"

Regular readers might remember me raving about Holland's BAMBIX last issue.

Fortunately for everyone, their back catalog is still available. This one captures what makes them such a truly wonderful band.

Marry the driving melodies of LEATHERFACE with the vocals of TWO of Cinder of TILT (she sings in wonderful harmony), and the passion and drive of HUSKER DU, and you've got a pretty good idea of why this band is vital. Don't let em pass you by... (RK)

(Bambix / PO Box 44053 / 5604 LB Eindhoven / The Netherlands)



BARONESS

"First" CD

You might say this is nue-metal. It's got a lot of guttural voices & down-tuned guitars. And yet, it's more advanced in rhythms than the days of yore. My guess is that this will make some metal boy extremely happy. (LD)
(www.hyperrealist.com)

BARS

"Introducing..." CD

This thing is an all out assault of rock swagger and core rage. Imagine if THE BRONX was a little more BAD BRAINS and BLACK FLAG or if THE STOOGES actually knew how to play their instruments. This album is an awesome collection of rock n' roll ragers drenched in spit and blood. Oh, and it features members of GUTG / AN, HOPECON, and others; this doesn't matter 'cause the motherfuckers burns without any "members of" buzz. (STM)
(www.equalvision.com)

BASEBALL FURIES

"Let It Be" LP

Having been a long time fan of these guys, I was surprised to see a new album from them on the shelves. I had assumed that they had split to focus on their other projects, but thankfully that wasn't the case. "Let It Be" is easily their best release to date and might prove to be one of the finest albums of the year. It's interesting to see a band get darker as they get poppier, and The Furies appear to be quite capable of pulling both off at the same time. Great record by a great band...what are you waiting for? (MC)
(www.bignecrecords.com)

BEFORE TODAY

"Celebration Of An Ending" CD

Combine a THIN LIZZY style of metal guitar, quick changing rhythms & layered harmonies, and you get this San Diego band. I have to say that this is a unique hardcore record. They way it's recorded keeps things fresh & the songs are really good - at times earsplitting - other times just oceans of guitar. (LD)
(www.equalvision.com)

THE BELLES

"Idle Acres" CD

Dreamy space-folk, Lawrence, Kansas style. A rather lovely CD. Hints of WILCO and / or GIANT SAND are detected, but not overwhelming, maybe throw in a little. All in all a textured and fantastic sounding outing. (JC)
(Second Nature Recordings / PO Box 413084 / Kansas City, MO 64141)

SOUNDSCAPE

BIG BUSINESS

"Head For The Shallow" CD

Wow. Pretty serious metal from two dudes who used to be in KARP & MURDER CITY DEVILS. Very loud crunchy guitar with a capital C! Intense drums al a HELLA. This is a pretty fun record, so if you're one of the many hooked on new metalcore, get this. (LD)
(www.hydrahead.com)

BOOKS ON TAPE

"The Business End" CD

This is the third album of demented beats from BOOKS ON TAPE. This one's inspired by David Lynch & Twin Peaks. This guy's quite the underground sampler artist. If you're looking for something a little different, this is it. (LD)
(www.gredayproductions.com)

BRANDON L. BUTLER

"Killer On The Road" CD

GERN always has new & interesting stuff. This is some really nice acoustic guitar rock. Mr. Butler kind of has that nasally BOB DYLAN whine that takes a while to get used to. But after a couple of songs, I was into it. The guitar playing & melodies are first rate. Recommended to fans of SON VOLT & ELLIOTT SMITH. Good stuff. (LD)
(www.gernblandsten.com)

BRAND VIOLET

"Alien Hive Theme" CD Single

"Retrovision Coima U.S.A." CD

This band is heavy on the kitsch and dripping with sugary syrup. Cutesy-pie female vocals and a band that plays like they were the band at the cocktail party in a Shag painting. Overall pretty fun, but like any good sugar high, they start to crash and the full length CD kind of peters by the end, landing with a thud with a flaccid version of Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots are Made for Walking". Like I say to punk bands that only ever cover the DEAD BOYS "Sonic Reducer", there are about 10 other great songs on that record that would be great to cover, as far as Nancy Sinatra, there is about 3 records full of tunes that would be awesome to hear new takes on, instead of just hearing a re-do of the hit, that has already been remade dozens of times. (JC)
(Riverside / P.O. Box 16595 / London / SW6 6FH / U.K.)

THE BRIEFS

"Sex Objects" CD

Album number three from the newly-crowned kings of poppy '77 punk. I'm happy to say that this kicks much ass over their sophomore slump album. Talk all the shit you want about them (I'd be likely to agree with you 73% of the time), but it's impossible to deny that The Briefs have the hooks and the hits. Who cares if it's a cartoon? POGO. (MC)
(www.byorecords.com)

THE BRIEFS

"Sex Objects" CD

THE BRIEFS have put out some of the best punk rock records in recent years, and Sex Objects continues their tradition of fast, fun, classic punk rock n' roll tunes. 14 songs, with topics that range from having sex with things made from plastic, to death by ants, to stealing, and everything else you can possibly imagine. During a time when too many bands take themselves too seriously, EVERYONE should be FORCED to own a CD by THE BRIEFS and then maybe we can all remember why we go into punk rock in the first place. Oh, and the layout has actual phone numbers in it. How fucking funny is that?? I bet that's pissed off more than a few people! (MWB)
(www.byorecords.com)

BULLETS AND OCTANE

"The Revelry" CD

Debut 11 tracks of cranked up punk n roll. They produce a heavy MISFITS vibe, together with a supercharged / amped up LAZY COWGIRLS / NEW BOMB TURKS / ZEKE feel. Good stuff. (RK)
(Criterion Records / www.criterionrecords.com)

BURY YOUR DEAD

"Cover Your Tracks" CD

This is the latest release from Victory metal / hardcore band BURY YOUR DEAD. None too far removed from

Victory's roots of brutal music, similar to label mates DEAD TO FALL and DARKEST HOUR. They name every song after a Tom Cruise movie. Kinda weird. The layout is pretty cool, too, with some girl getting carried out in a body bag. Cool layouts are a big plus in my book. (MWB)
(www.victoryrecords.com)

BURY YOUR DEAD

"Cover Your Tracks" CD

Big fat moshy metallic hardcore that leans closer to the metallic than the hardcore, but it still good nonetheless. All you hardcore kids that love the PANTERA albums that your big brother gave you when you were little but also listen to SHADOWS FALL while rockin' your FULL BLOWN CHAOS hoodie, well, you guys are gonna love this band. (STM)
(www.victoryrecords.com)

BRANDON L. BUTLER

"Killer On The Road" CD

GERN always has new & interesting stuff. This is some really nice acoustic guitar rock. Mr. Butler kind of has that nasally BOB DYLAN whine that takes a while to get used to. But after a couple of songs, I was into it. The guitar playing & melodies are first rate. Recommended to fans of SON VOLT & ELLIOTT SMITH. (LD)
(www.gernblandsten.com)

ED BUZZARD

"Tranquilizante Del Elefante" CD

You've heard of butt rock. Well, this is its nephew, turd metal. Yeah, I couldn't see past the sludge here. Hard hitting pile drivers of guitar and bass drum. Completely screamed vocals. And everything's filtered through some effect. Not my thing. (LD)
(www.electrichumanproject.com)

CAMPGROUND EFFECT

"The Flight Seat" CD EP

Apart from the opening guitar riff which sounds just like the PIXIES, I didn't like this. It just sounds like all the other bands out there trying to recreate the early 90's. I mean track two could be a lost NIRVANA track. Not worth it. (LD)
(www.thelocalcannery.com)

CARTEL

"The Ransom" CD

I like this CD. Yes, I can see the 16-year-old girls in the front row swaying and singing and asking for autographs - but what can I say, I'm a sucker for pop. This shit is tight, well written, and aggressive when it has to be, but with plenty of hooks to keep it interesting. Definitely in the vein of early NEW FOUND GLORY, with a touch of SAVES THE DAY. Definitely worth checking out. (MWB)
(www.themilitiagroup.com)

NEKO CASE

"The Tigers Have Spoken" CD

NEKO CASE & GILLIAN WELCH have made country cool

again over the past few years. Lord knows they've reignited my interest. Ms. Case consistently puts out great alt country, starting with her 1997 debut, "The Virginian." Quite simply, her voice just makes any song good. And here's the live album to prove it, filled with favorites, new songs & covers. It's my favorite by her so far! (LD)
(www.anti.com)

CHE:CHAPTER 127

"Martyrs For Monuments" CD

8 track mini LP - and a scorching follow-up to their debut full-length. Think of GANG OF FOUR, with a flamethrower up their ass, and a blistering female vocalist leveling her vitriol (and brain) at imperialism, war, global capitalism and US

foreign policy. If fellow Canadians SUBMISSION HOLD are a machine-gun, these guys are a veritable cruise missile (if you'll pardon the overly militarist analogy). (RK)
(Distributed by G7 / www.g7welcomingcommittee.com)

COLLECTIONS OF COLONIES OF BEES

"Customer" CD

What bad could come from two guys in the great indie instrumental group PELE? The answer is nothing! This experimental album is a delight. It's half electronic, half acoustic. The songs are filtered through some kind of computer randomizer or something and the result is a high-tech beauty. Strongly recommended to fans of IDM acts like OP-ATE & FENNESZ. I love it! (LD)
(www.polyvinylrecords.com)

CONTRIBUTION

"What Is Your" CD

The guys on this record have got the right idea. I mean their politics are right on point. So I give them extra credit for their critiques of the modern world. On the other hand, I'm not too keen on their music, which is a little sloppy, but this record's got more pluses than minuses. (LD)
(www.skatepunk.net / goldenrod)

CORDERO

"Somos Cordero" CD

A CD of delightful low-key pop. With a definite Latin inflection. Half the songs are sung in Spanish, and a nice bit of keyboard only adds to the charm. If there was any artistic justice in the world, this would be insinuating its way over the airwaves. Of course, there isn't, so you'll just have to track it down. (RK)
(Daemon Records / www.daemonrecords.com)

COUP DE GRACE

"Ventura Threeway" CD

Ooh, I love those cosmopolitan French names. But the record feels incomplete, like they forgot to record the last few tracks. They're also part of a new annoying scene here in SF, which includes such shitty acts as THE COACHWHIPS. Pass. (LD)
(Sonic Jihad Records / no address)

COYOTE SHIVERS

"Give It To Ya Twice" CD

New York scum rock hero COYOTE SHIVERS delivers a whopping 2 disc set. The first is an open-ended lover letter to Sex, Drugs n Rock and Roll, written in all capitals, with Exclamation points at the end of every sentence. Disc 2 is an acoustic, "Open ended love letter...." with more of a mourning after, blurry eyed vantage point. Devotees of Johnny Thunders, Pussy Galore and / or Royal Trux should dig this. (JC)
(Foodchain / 6525 Sunset Blvd / 4th Floor / Hollywood, CA 90028)

CRIMSON SWEET

"Blood Transfusion" 7" EP

Finally! Another disc by one of NYC's finest. Hopefully you caught wind of this band on their "Livin' In Strut" album from a couple years back. On "Blood Transfusion", they continue to craft dark, catchy and powerful Rock'n'Roll that you just can't quite pin down? Is it full-blown rawk? Is it bleak, wavy punk? Call it whatever you want...just fucking listen to it. While I'm not as hot on this single as I am on their previous releases, I still find them to be one of the better East Coast combos going today. If you haven't heard them yet...man...seek them out. (MC)
(www.shakeitrecords.com)

THE CROWN

"Crowned Unholy" CD

Man, see THE HAUNTED review because these dudes are in the same boat. It may all come down to whether you already dig THE CROWN or not. The bonus with this cd is that it comes with a dvd with tons of footage. (STM)
(www.metalblade.com)

CUT-OFFS

"Fat, Drunk And Angry" CD

I suspect they're pretty old too. They do manage to crank out some fairly generic three chord basic snot. Early



SCREECHING WEASEL minus the tunes, and barbed wit. A plus for effort though... (RK) (www.thecut-offs.com)

DEAD HATE THE LIVING "Shock & Awe" CD

The album art for this one ranks pretty high on the gross-out scale. But I gotta give props to hardcore / metal bands with a girl member. The tunes are ball busting & soon you'll find yourself a fan of this odd group. Sure to be a hit in the tight-pants-wearing hardcore scene. (LD) (no address)

DEAD TO FALL

"Villainy & Virtue" CD

This is the tough guy, brutal hardcore that Victory made its name on. It's hard to believe that this is on the same label as Taking Back Sunday, Hawthorne Heights, etc. Anyway, on their second release, Dead To Fall continue to blend hardcore and death metal, offering up ten new tracks. It's not going to blow you away with originality, but it's worth a listen. Pick this one up if you dig the tough shit. (MWB) (www.victoryrecords.com)

DESTRUCTION 412 self-titled CD

This is pretty weak and you guys aren't winning any points with anti-Saddam lyrics (makes you seem like Bushies) and those denim shorts. Seriously, guys, denim shorts? Oh, and guys, unless BC Rich and Mesa Boogie and Dunlop and Tech21 are giving you money or free shit, there is no reason to include their actual logos in your layout. (STM) (www.destruction412.com)

DETONATIONS "Static Vision" CD

The buzz and howl, the fuzz, the swagger and the big beat, bad attitude, cool sunglasses and hip lyrics, it's all here. The DETONATIONS fuck your stereo and leave your speakers soiled. Stick this in your pipe and smoke it. (JC) (Alive / P.O. Box 7112 / Burbank, CA 91510)

DEVO

"Live In The Land Of The Rising Sun" DVD

I have been in love with DEVO for a long, long time. Because of that, I feel that it is my duty to review this release in 2 parts: Part one—The Fan: This is a great DVD that features a stellar performance by the band on a date in Japan a couple of years back. They play all the hits and the crowd goes nuts. There are also some fantastic bonus features, band interviews, and a short, incredible performance from 1980 that was clipped from the old Target video collection. Part two—The Caustic Music Critic: Still hungry for revolution. When will the band wake up and realize that they are a bunch of old overweight guys playing an oldies set (not a single song on this is less than 18 years old, most are about 22-25 years old)? No matter how good the performance is, it is irrelevant judged purely on the band's own doctrine. Clearly they are not too old to perform well; certainly they aren't too old to invent new material. It's time for them to "give the past the slip" and create something new. Evolve or die, motherfuckers! I didn't get my ass kicked for having funny hair in the '80s, by jocks calling me "DEVO," so that I could grow up and have one of the best bands of the time just be an oldies act. (JC) (MVD / P.O. Box 280 / Oaks, PA 19456)

DOA

"Live Free Or Die" CD

They're back. Not that they ever (fortunately for us) went away. DOA's 12th studio album (in 26 illustrious years!), and it rocks. Hard. Picking up where "Win The Battle" left off, it melds punk, hardcore, rock and a touch of ska to make that distinctive DOA sound. Remember "Hardcore 81" and "War On 45"? It's that time again. Dive in, you won't regret it. Power, passion, politics and a kiss. 21 tracks ready to take on the New World Order - 3 killer covers and a "Fucked Up Bush". (RK) (Sudden Death Records / www.suddendeath.com)

DOLLYROTS

"Eat My Heart Out" CD

Debut LP from this female-fronted power trio. Mix the MUFFS, mid-period MR T EXPERIENCE, with a dash of the BREEDERS and J-CHURCH, and you have a pretty fine brew. Nothing earth-shattering. But fine. For sure. (RK) (www.dollyrots.com)



THE DOLLYROTS

"Eat my Heart Out" CD

THE DOLLYROTS seem to me to fall somewhere in between THE MUFFS and THE CHUBBIES, which isn't a bad place to be at all. They are able to go bubblegum, without being trite and then they can just out right rock. I don't love this CD, but there is certainly a lot to like about it. (JC)

(Panic Button / 3264 Adeline St. / Berkeley, CA 94703)

DUCKY BOYS

"Three Chords And The Truth" CD

Boston's street-punk heroes are back. And they're sounding better than ever. Lots of swagger, lots of snarl, lots of 1st LP CLASH. Lots of 3rd LP RANCID, and just enough rough edged early REPLACEMENTS to keep it interesting. Rousing stuff indeed. (RK) (Thorp Records / www.thorprecords.com)

DWARVES

"Must Die" CD

Another "everything but the kitchen sink" DWARVES record. I love the DWARVES and have been listening to them for almost 20 years now, but it breaks my heart to say that this one just isn't worth picking up. There are a couple of tracks that remind you of just why you love the band, and then there are just a whole lot of songs that are hard to take. I know that they are fucking around with all sorts of different styles, but man, I just get sick of listening to Blag rap, or techno break downs etc. I love Rock and Roll, when The DWARVES strip down all of the BS, few can do it better, you just have to put up with a whole lot of jerking off to get to it on this release. (JC) (Sympathy)

ELEVATOR DIVISION

"Years" CD

Aside from maybe taking itself too seriously, this is a pretty good record. Sort of a gateway between THE CURE & THE SHINS. Definitely emo, whether they'd admit it or not. I give it a 6 out of 10 because it's a little too slick for me in some parts. (LD) (www.secondnaturerecordings.com)

FIGHTING CHANCE

"Sacrifice And Struggle" CD

Second blistering hardcore full-length from this Baltimore powerhouse. The back up the raging twin axe thrash and chug with some suitably ferocious, intelligent anti-fascist lyrics. Nice to have some H / C with a brain, as well as a heart (and pointy finger). Not to mention some royal guitar solos. Insurgence is a great Canadian label dedicated to putting out lefty, anti-fascist skinhead and hardcore bands. And they do it well. (RK) (Insurgence Records / www.insurgence.net)

FIGHTING CHANCE

"Sacrifice and Struggle" CD

Pretty straight-forward, tough-guy hardcore punk. I'm thinking Slapshot, The Pist, bands like that. Solid political lyrics with lots of growling. Nothing new here, but they do what they do pretty well. The CD ends with 58 straight tracks of 7 to 8 seconds of dead air, only to lead to track 69, which sounds like a porn movie moan session with a little music. Get it - track 69? Yeah, I didn't laugh either. (MWB) (www.insurgence.net)

FLESHIES

"Gung Ho!"

Loud. Smelly. Singles and rarities compilation. Good. Wake up. (MC) (www.lifeisabuse.com)

JOHN FOGERTY

"Déjà vu All Over Again" CD

Not the kind of release that we would normally review here, but as a proud resident of El Cerrito, CA and a life long CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL fan, it was hard to resist. This new release is consistent in themes (baseball, bayou + politics) and quality that have graced all John Fogerty's post CCR releases and could have been easily titled "Still chooglin after all these years". The title track hits you right in the breadbasket, with it's somber take of the current dismal state of the union as seen through the eyes of someone who fought for the cause so many years ago and seems a bit shell-shocked to find that we haven't learned very well from the past. The next few tracks are well-crafted pop numbers that seem to find Fogerty still proving himself as a writer of substance. After those he and the band just seem to want to have fun and the rest of the CD is a good time, especially fun when they dig down deep into the Swamp Pop for tunes like "Rhubarb Pie and "Wicked Old Witch". (JC) (Geffen)

FORCED REALITY

"Unheard, Unreleased And Under The Boot" CD

FR were, for what it's worth, one of the original US skinhead / Oi bands, forming in '86. This is a bunch of rare stuff, largely taken from their reformation period in the late 90s. Covers of the VIOLATORS and CRIMINAL CLASS give a good idea of their interpretation of "Strength Thru Oil!" Better than the rubbish the BUSINESS are doing these days, that's for sure. (RK) (Thorp Records / www.thorprecords.com)

FORENSICS

"Things To Do When You Should Be Dead" CD

This is mostly for metal dudes & former HELMET & METALLICA fans. I find nothing worthwhile here except the artwork, which makes this look like indie folk. The instrumental interludes are nice too. (LD) (www.magicbulletrecords.com)

GASOLINE FIGHT

"Useless Piece Of Weaponry" CD EP

Ex members of SMALL BROWN BIKE, TRAITORS, PERALTO and SWEEP THE LEG JOHNNY gather together 5 tracks of uncomfortable, edgy, raging emo. Amped up and angular, it provides a sonic rash to the skin. Think a cranked up early GANG OF FOUR at 78rpm. Music to set your beard on fire. (RK)

(Thick Records / www.thickrecords.com)

GENERAL RUDIE

"Take Your Place" CD

Smooth, melodic ad soulful 5th generation Ska. GENERAL RUDIE are a band that really gets what it is all about. You can always tell the Ska bands that have the better record collections. The ones that get the craft of it and don't just play clipped, up-stroke chords at a fever pitch, so they sound like circus music. GENERAL RUDIE has soul and it shows. (JC) (Stomp / 78 Rachel / E. Montreal, Quebec / H2W 1C6 Canada)

GOLDENBOY

"Right Kind Of Wrong" CD

The latest (Northern) European pop-punk sensations? You betcha! GOLDENBOY mix that smooth TRAVOLTA'S sound with the drive and melody of NO FUN AT ALL. An exquisite release for sure. (RK) (Fastmusic / Cold Front Records / PO Box 206812 / New Haven, CT 06520)

GREEN DAY

"American Idiot" CD

Being a huge Green Day fan, I was sure that I would love their latest release, "American Idiot", but I never could have predicted how strongly it has affected me. The Bay Area trio has constructed an album able to hit you at all points. From the pissed off title track "American Idiot" and "Holiday", the aggressively fun "St. Jimmy", the despondent "Boulevard of Broken Dreams", the painfully nostalgic feel of "Whatsername", and the heartbreak of "Wake Me Up When September Ends". Green Day has

SOUNDSCAPE

found all of the right buttons to push and they dig their thumbs right in. It can be open to debate whether or not this is Green Day's best album, but it is surely their strongest. "American Idiot" is perfect if you're a riff and lick sucker like myself. Tre and Dirnt have never sounded tighter, and this album contains some of the best lyrics Billie Joe has ever penned. "American Idiot" is sure to hush many Green Day naysayers. This is truly Green Day's gleaming opus. Exemplary Tracks: The whole freaking album. (DM)
(Reprise Records, 3300 Warner Blvd. Burbank, CA 91505-4694 / www.repriserecords.com / www.greenaday.com)

GREENLIGHT THE BOMBERS "American Executive" CD

A new one from Oakland. Immediately calls to mind DRIVE LIKE JEHU & their driving brand of rock beat. But listen further & you'll hear enough changes to keep you into it all the way through. Nods to FUGAZI & DILUTE. This is a band to watch for sure. (LD)
(www.greenlightthebombers.com)



THE HAUNTED "Revolver" CD

A lot of my metal friends argue over the merits of this band, but most of it centers on AT THE GATES. I bet THE HAUNTED wish that those comparisons would stop because, frankly, no band will ever be as rad as ATG. Anyhow, I still like the Haunted because they still kick the ass of most of the lame metal around these days. Look, if you like metal with a NU in front of it, you should already know about this band. (STM)
(www.centurymedia.com)

HELLBILLYS "Blood Trilogy Vol. 1" CD

With lyrics like "Grim Reaper's at your door" and "Slippin' and slidin' on bloody guts all day" and song titles like "Devil's Dildo" and "You and me and the Devil Makes 3", do I really need to say any more? The band is a cornerstone of the psycho-billy scene. A feast of "Billy", classic horror show punk and flashes of metal. (JC)
(Split 7 / 12405 / Venice Blvd. #265 / L.A., CA 90066)

HOT LIKE (A) ROBOT "Hurry Up And Die" CD

10 tracks of discordant, thrashed out stoner rock. Imagine what FLIPPER would do to a bunch of GREEN RIVER out-takes. Not a pretty thought. Doesn't sound too good either. Some nifty Blair Witch Projectesque art though... (RK)
(Criterion Records / www.criterionrecords.com)

HOT WATER MUSIC "The New What Next" CD

You know what you're getting when you're talking about Hot Water Music. They created a style all their own, getting better and better at it for the better part of a decade. They did something a little different this time - there's more singing, less growling, but still rules. It's good to see that signing to Epitaph never changed these guys. But what's with the layout? Don't get me wrong, it's pretty impressive - but not very Hot Water Music-ish. Either way, this is another classic release from one of the defining bands of our generation. (MWB)
(www.epitaph.com)

HOT WATER MUSIC "The New What Next" CD

HOT WATER MUSIC almost always sounds hopeful & gut-wrenching, as if this is their one shot & they're going to give it everything. Well, this album is their best release since 2000's retrospective "Never Ender." Maybe shaving off those beards refreshed things overall cuz these songs are amazing. (LD)
(www.epitaph.com)

HOLLY GOLIGHTLY "Down Gina's at 3" CD

The queen of the lo-fi delivers a great set of 20 some gems from all over her career. A no frills recording job that catches just what it needs, plus a few bottles clinking and drunken revelry amongst the attendees of the show. Fans of Holly, THE HEADCOATEES, etc. will surely be leased. (JC)
(Sympathy)

THE HUSBANDS / DEADLY WEAPONS split 7"

Hey hey, whataya know? A split 7" from The Bay Area's two most prevalent female-fronted punkers. This split, intended as a tribute to THE EXPLODING HEARTS, catches both bands in fine form, each covering a couple of their favorite tunes. The Husbands make their strongest showing to date with their haunting SHANGRI-LAS cover. Deadly Weapons (R.I.P.) check in with a rude and snotty rendition of THE REPLACEMENTS' "Don't Ask Why", a perfect selection. A fine split 7". Buy 5 so Floyd can fix his teeth! (MC)
(Not A Problem Records, P.O. Box 420802, San Francisco, CA 94142)

I CAN MAKE A MESS LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS self-titled CD

This is the first solo offering from Ace Enders of THE EARLY NOVEMBER, and it's a pretty good effort. A lot of acoustic stuff, but with some upbeat numbers mixed in, too. There was a bunch of crap surrounding this CD over the past year - it was coming out, then it wasn't, then it was, then it got pushed back, whatever. Well, it's here now, and worth picking up if you're into the pop rock of bands such as The Early November. (MWB)
(www.drivethrurerecords.com)

IRON GUTS KELLY self-titled CD

IGK mix the sensibilities of Oi / Streetpunk with a powerful driving guitar and gruff vocals. A hybrid of the DROPKICK MURPHYS and GBH. Great self-produced effort. (RK)
(www.irongutskelly.com)

ISIS "Panopticon" CD

If you like CONVERGE and CAVE IN and BOTCH and DEP and you haven't already ordered this CD, well, you suck. ISIS is where it's at. (STM)
(www.ipecac.com)

JOHN BUTLER TRIO "What You Want" CD

A really nice EP from this Australian native. Sort of a cross between BEN HARPER & DAMIEN RICE. Go figure that the newest Americana comes from down under! (LD)
(www.lavarecords.com)

KARATE "Pockets" CD

It's no secret. I love this band. I discovered them a few years ago. Their album "Bed Is In The Ocean" is one of the best indie rock records ever. If you haven't heard them yet, or the singer Geoff Farina, they're similar to PINBACK or a jazzy FUGAZI. Not to mention their lyrics are really stories & personal essays rather than song lyrics. This new one is some of their best work. Be sure to get this! (LD)
(www.southern.com)

KISSING TIGERS "Pleasure Of Resistance" CD

What a great record! They've got that new wave vibe of THE FAINT, but carry it in a much more laid-back, sexy way. And for a bunch of under-21 dudes, this is really accomplished. Pick this one up - it's a winner. (LD)
(www.slowdance.com)

KISSING TREES "Pleasure of Resistance" CD

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(www.slowdance.com)

KNOCKDOWN

"The Game Is Ours" CD

Workmanlike LP of European (Dutch to be precise) street-punk. Nothing standout. And the lyrics - all in English - border on the inane. Songs about football (soccer to you, pal), hooliganism, fighting (not losing, of course), unfaithful women, drinking and sex. Their main claim to fame is having the ex-guitar player of DISCIPLINE now in their ranks. Ho hum. (RK)
(Rebellion Records / www.rebellionrecords.nl)

LAMB OF GOD

"Ashes Of The Wake" CD

Do I really need to say anything? This is one of the premier modern metal bands (straight up metal son, not a hardcore band playing metal). LAMB OF GODS greatest strength is that can draw upon almost forty years of heavy metal history in order to craft a perfect fucking form of metal that encompasses all things...well...metal. If you're a hesher, you should already own this. If you want to be a hesher, start here and you won't need much else. (STM)
(www.epic.com)

LATTITUDE BLUE / FELL CITY GIRL split CD

Some really nice emo / indie rock here. Sort of the same mood as SWERVEDRIVER. Both bands have that nice falsetto voice & shimmery guitars. Plus they're British, so that gives them more cred. (LD)
(www.bleeding-music.com)

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Some really nice emo / indie rock here. Sort of the same mood as SWERVEDRIVER. Both bands have that nice falsetto voice & shimmery guitars. Plus they're British, so that gives them extra cred. (LD)
(www.bleeding-music.com)

TH' LEGENDARY SHACK*SHAKERS "Believe" CD

Blasting out from the flames of a burning church comes TH' LEGENDARY SHACK*SHAKERS. This trio of madmen sounds like the howling bastard child of REV. HORTON HEAT and THROWRAG; ugly as the dickens with a sinister rock n' roll strut to match. This album opens with the scream of a steam engine that knocks the angel off your shoulder and sends him flying. And it doesn't stop there. Mark Robinson and David Lee in the rhythm section keep you chugging along, madly chasing after that train from Hell, and front man Col. J.D. Wilkes awakens the devil inside of you and makes sinnin' sound fun again. The only difficulty you'll have while listening to this album is deciding whether it makes you want to fight or fuck. Exemplary Tracks: Where's the Devil, Piss and Vinegar, County of Graves. (DM)
(Yep Roc Records / P.O. Box 4821, Chapel Hill, NC, 27515 / www.yeproc.com)

LE TIGRE "This Island" CD

I know, I know. What the fuck am I doing reviewing this record? Well, let the record show that I was blown away by this band's early material and am still a close follower of their every move. I'd like to say that it's a coincidence that I don't like their major label debut, "This Island", as much as I like their previous material...but it's probably not. The thing that initially appealed to me about this band was their knack for injecting punk sensibility, smart personal-political analysis and real HUMAN sounds / emotions into electronic dance music. Isn't it ironic then that their politics and sensibilities come shining through on this release, but the music is dullsville??? The guitars, once punky and distorted, now sound canned and processed. It's now little more than modern / techno MADONNA with a sharp political / social / sexual conscience. (MC)
(www.letigremusic.com)

LEFTOVER CRACK "Rock the 40 Oz." CD

These guys are everywhere! For those who don't know, LEFTOVER CRACK is made up of ex-members of Suicidal Tendencies, Choking Victim, F-Minus, and a bunch more. They incorporate just about every sound imaginable. This

one is a re-release of their first 7", on CD for the first time, along with a bunch of demos and hard to find comp tracks. It's got the original liner notes, too, along with music video for Rock the 40 Oz. This is where it all began. Good shit, the sounds that LEFTOVER CRACK is making a name for themselves with. If you've never heard this band, this is a good place to start. (MWB) (www.bankshotrecords.com)

LET IT BURN

"The Expanding Universe" CD

After what seems like a 13 year wait, LET IT BURN are back with their second full-length, on Chunksaah records this time. It's a punk rock match made in Heaven – a straight up punk band from Jersey on a straight up punk label from Jersey. Fast, catchy, melodic punk rock songs that are catchy as hell. As with most LET IT BURN songs, the music is the driving force. The lyrical styling is less than amazing, with the rhymes being a bit too obvious sometimes, but the strength of the music carries this one though. A good listen from start to finish, and without a doubt the most complete work that LET IT BURN has released to date. (MWB) (www.chunksaah.com)

LETLIVE

"Exhaustion, Salt Water, and Everything In Between" CD

Just another band from the mass of bands. LETLIVE are playing the loud, screamo-emo-pop stuff that everyone else is playing these days. But, they do it worse than most bands, which makes it very hard to listen to. The eight songs have no sense of rhythm or flow, and feels awkward and forced. Pass on this one. (MWB) (www.at1records.com)

THE LIDS

self-titled LP

The sexiest band in Atlanta, GA...courtesy of Rip Off Records! The Lids have been causing quite a stir in certain circles, marking a return to the male / female snot-punk once championed by LOLI AND THE CHONES. They spice things up by throwing in some great girl-group back-ups and enough sex appeal to choke a horse. Highly recommended for all you kids who watch you parents' Cinemax before going to sleep in your racecar-shaped beds. Nighty-night. (MC) (www.ripoffrecords.org)

LIFE OR DEATH

"Sentenced" CD

Sweet Jesus, brace yourself before you push play. This motherfucker will club you unconscious like a Hunters Point cop with some of the most brutal, precise, and horrific metallic hardcore to grace these jaded ears in years. I immediately thought of MERAUDER, but references can also be made to metal-influenced hardcore (not metalcore) masters like INTEGRITY, HATEBREED, and ALL OUT WAR. Get it and fucking destroy. (STM) (www.1917records.com)

LITTLE YELLOW BOX

self-titled" CD EP

The sticker on the front says 'For Fans of At The Drive In.' Well, I'm a fan of that band, but this didn't do it for me. Definitely has an At The Drive In feel to it, sometimes to a fault. Some weird funk parts thrown in, too. I'm really just not sure what to make of these guys. (MWB) (www.negativeprogression.com)

LOCK AND KEY

"Pull Up The Floorboards" CD

More boys with guitars! Oh my gosh how inventive! Sorry, but the sea of bands is just about to choke me. The good news is that this is pretty decent. They seem to have something going here if they can just break away from the blueprint a little more. (LD) (www.deepelm.com)

LOCKGROOVE

"Calm Right Down" CD

This band has been compared to SPIRITUALIZED & SPACEMEN 3 for their psychedelic rock vibe. I hear that, but there are more melodies and well, songs, than 20-minute jam sessions. At any rate, they're catching lots of press & playing

shows with big name groups. I really like the record. It's carefully recorded & gives a nice happy feeling. (LD) (www.sharkattackmusic.com)

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TH' LOSIN STREAKS

"Sounds Of Violence" CD

These no-goods have been turning quite a few heads recently with their live show. Thankfully, the live heroics have made a winning transfer to vinyl, making "Sounds Of Violence" one of the year's finest REAL garage punk records. Th' Losin Streaks feature folks from THE TROUBLEMAKERS and ZODIAC KILLERS and it shows. Tim Foster's mid-fi garage know-how coupled with Matt K's unhinged black-and-blue drumming???? C'mon! That's a recipe for success if there ever was one. They haven't reinvented the wheel here, but it's rolling pretty fucking good. (MC) (www.slovenly.com)



LOVE EQUALS DEATH

"4 Notes On A Dying Scale" CD EP

4 track debut from former members of TSUNAMI BOMB and LOOSE CHANGE. They mix up early AFI hardcore stylings with lots of NYC breakdowns ad chuggas. Spritely, yet muscular, for sure. (RK) (Popsmeat Records / www.loveequalsdeath.com)

LOVE IS RED

"The Hardest Fight" CD

I dig bands that can contradict themselves. This band sounds like your favorite brutal-as-fuck metallic hardcore band (ala HATEBREED and TERROR) yet deliver some heartfelt and emotional lyrics. People are complicated and this band does a great job of illustrating that in both message, sound, and feeling. If metallic hardcore is your thing but your tired of the cliché lyrics about brotherhood, yet find the false emotion of today's metalcore screamo dorks laughable, check out this band. (STM) (www.stillbornrecords.com)

LOVE OF EVERYTHING

"Handjob Community" CD

This is one of the most irritating albums that I've heard in recent months. The vocals are atrocious & I don't use words like that lightly. Then some tracks have nice music but again with the voice! It just ruins anything good about this record. Stinker. (LD) (www.redderrecords.com)

LOVE SONGS

"All Branches, No Trunk" CD

Craig, the man behind such legends as ALL YOU CAN EAT, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? and YOUR MOTHER, has put together a new(ish), tight as fuck punk rock outfit who have produced a sprawling, eclectic, rock-opera of a disc. Think NOFX doing the next Rocky Horror Picture show. Or METALICA taking on Tommy. It's that good. That funny. That sublimely music. That engaged. What're you waiting for!? (RK) (New Disorder Records & 625 Thrash Records / www.thelovesongs.com)

THE LUCKY PUNCH

"Kick Up A Hullabaloo" CD

Somebody fucking shoot me. Add The Lucky Punch to the list of bad European hair-punk. Ya know the drill: cock-sure, rify, HELLACOPTERS bile. Whataya know? There's a chick on the cover! Never seen that before! (MC) (www.dead-beat-records.com)

LURKERS

"Live Freak Show" CD

I guess the LURKERS, one of the Brit originals (from '77), are still going strong. Older. Fatter, certainly. This is a live CD. Recorded in Germany in 2003. And it's pretty good too. The surviving original members can still bash out the ol' speedy pop-punk. And they wisely stick largely to their early albums. A cover of "The KKK Took My Baby Away" will give the uninitiated some idea of the 'RAMONES on meth' sound they did (and do) so well. (RK) (Kotumba Records / PO box 40510 / Santa Barbara, CA 93140)

MAD CADDIES

"Songs In The Key Of Eh" CD

19 tracks. Recorded live in Canada (get the title, you dig!?). Culled from all their 5 records. This is a fitting testament to how great their songs are, and how well they do em live.

The next best thing to experiencing em live up close and personal, and a great introduction to one of the best, eclectic, melodic punk bands with sing, dub and horns around! (RK) (Fat Wreck Chords / www.fatwreck.com)

MAD CADDIES

"Songs In The Key Of Eh" CD

The latest release from one of the biggest Ska bands out there, this is a live release out on Fat. Recorded in Toronto (the key of eh – get it??), this is a pretty decent representation of what you'll get from these guys live. Nineteen songs that will make you skank, if you can get past the embarrassment of being someone who still skanks. Perfect for all you rudies out there. (MWB) (www.fatwreck.com)

MAN OF THE YEAR

"A New & Greater Tokyo" CD

We've got a pretty boring pop record here. It's hard to think of what else to say. The band is coed and squeaky clean. They just don't have the hooks they need to reel me in. Also the production is weird and way too tinny. (LD) (www.tinybeatrecords.com)

MARVELS

"Cheat To Win" CD

8 tracks of LAZY COWGIRLS meets ZEKE rock n roll, down and dirty type stuff. Unfortunately, not an exemplary example of the genre, but decent enough, I sponse. (RK) (Abbey Lounge Records / www.abbeylounge.com)

MASTODON

"Leviathan" CD

This band totally lives up to the hype that surrounds it. One of the best metal albums to come along in a very long time. Tech when it needs to be, beautiful when it needs to be, this album is an all-encompassing sonic experience. Check them out before your friends tell you to. Oh, and it's a concept album. Oh, the concept is Moby Dick. Oh, it still rules. (STM) (www.relapse.com)

MATCHBOOK ROMANCE

"Stories And Alibis" CD

I have to say I'm the wrong kind of chap to review this kind of stuff. Is this even punk? Certainly well played / produced modern emo / indie / guitar stuff. Not too whiny, but it leaves me utterly cold. Apparently they were a huge hit on the Warped tour. (RK) (Epitaph / www.epitaph.com)

MATCHBOOK ROMANCE / MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK

"In Transit" CD EP

Aargh. Where will all this punk / indie goes acoustic nonsense end. What you have here is one new acoustic track, and one acoustic reworking of an old fave (of the kids, certainly, not mine). I've said it a hundred times, I know, but if you have a hankering for acoustic guitars, dump this pretentious shit and check out the real deal - PHIL OCHS, LEON ROSSELSON, DAVID ROVICS, UTAH PHILLIPS, SI KAHN, WOODY GUTHRIE, HAZEL DICKENS - hell, even "A

SOUNDSCAPE

Mighty Wind"!!! (RK)
(Epitaph / www.epitaph.com)

MEDICATIONS self-titled CD EP

In a way this new band from Devin Ocampo of FARAQUET reminds me of PINBACK. It's got that same kaleidoscopic rhythm. These are really great post-punk songs fully rooted in pop. Instantly you are moving to this music. The five tracks here are excellent and any fan of indie-rock should pick this up immediately. You won't be disappointed. (LD) (www.dischord.com)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES "Ruin Johnny's Bar Mitzvah"

Eventually, someday, at some point, ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES are going to run out of songs to cover. Well, maybe not, but doesn't it seem like these dudes have covered every song ever written? Either way, we all know what to expect with these guys - punk rock covers of classic rock songs. They've also got what every cover record needs - two versions of Hava Nagila! No live Bar Mitzvah CD would be complete without it, that's for sure. If you don't think this CD is fun, you're fucked. (MWB) (www.fatwreck.com)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES "Ruin Jonny's Bar Mitzvah" CD

14 'new' classic suitably punkified by the punk rock super-group tribute band. You get "Stairway To Heaven", "Heart Of Glass", "Come Sail Away", "Strawberry Fields Forever", "Auld Lang Syne", "On My Mind" and more you'll recognize. And some rather witty liner notes and 'stage' banter. Perhaps their best yet. (RK) (Fat Wreck Chords / www.fatwreck.com)

JELLO BIAFRA with THE MELVINS "Never Breathe What You Can't See" CD

This record is exactly what you expect if you are familiar with either of these artists. Crushing metallic punk riffs, with manic vocals that have acidic, hard left leaning lyrics. So, basically, a pretty swell disc that should be mandatory listening in all high school history and economics classics. The only thing that I didn't like on this was occasionally Jello's vocals seemed chopped, like they were just punching in the cool parts here and there and makes his performance a bit stunted. Other than that I would rank this as the best Jello project that I have heard in a long time, and the MELVINS seem to get a little bouncier when Jello is with them. (JC) (Alternative Tentacles / P.O. Box 419092 / San Francisco, CA 94141-9092)

METHADONES "Not Economically Viable" CD

Third full length (in the space of 11 years). And, as ever, it's a wonderful vehicle for the beautifully crafted pop hooks, melodies and harmonies of DAN SCHAFFER. SCHAFFER (nee VAPID) is one of the main men behind SCREECHING WEASEL, RIVERDALES, MOPES and the mighty SLUDGE-WORTH. You can probably figure out what this sounds like from that. And it's well worth indulging in... (RK) (Thick Records / www.thickrecords.com)

MILLION DOLLAR MARXISTS "Give It A Name" CD

Now this is exactly the sort of record I think of when someone mentions Gearhead Records. I don't think of overblown hair rawk. I think of tough-sounding punk Rock 'N' Roll with guts and balls...and that's exactly what Million Dollar Marxists have going for them. Immediately similar to label-mates "DEMONS" and RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS, MDM charge at you full-steam with a loud, wild and surprisingly catchy brand punk. Drinking music...and since it's Gearhead...driving music too! (MC) (www.gearheadrecords.com)

MISS TK & THE REVENGE "XOXO" CD

Here's the next new-wave dance hit! Think TRACY & THE PLASTICS with more groove. Although it harkens back to the 80's, there's plenty of post-punk on here too. Basically, it's got a good beat and you can dance to it. The new ADULT. (LD) (www.gernblandsten.com)

MOMENTS IN GRACE "Moonlight Survived" CD

So this is the first LP by this band, and the debut release on the legendary Brian McTernan's new Atlantic imprint, Salad Days. Having said that, I'm pretty disappointed in this release. It's not that they're bad - to tell you the truth, they seem to be very talented musicians - it just didn't do anything for me. Very major-label, radio-rock feel to it. If that's your thing, go pick this up. They'll be huge pretty soon. (MWB) (www.atlantic-records.com)

MOMENTS LOSS "The Forgetting" CD

All the horror stories & lineup changes in the press kit make this album seem like a waste of our time. They don't seem to be able to keep anything together. So why should we listen to their record? Well, because it's a pretty good post-punk cd. Good songs = listeners. So all y'all check this out. (LD) (www.momentsloss.com)

MONSTER SQUAD / ABUSE / WHISKY REBELS / CROPKNOX

"California Republic" CD
Four Northern Californian bands. Each with 4 tracks. All play (and largely sport the look, too) the leather n studs UK '82 sound. Bit of GBH, bit of ENGLISH DOGS, but of UK SUBS. And they all do it pretty good too. A Fine introduction to some new(ish) bands. (RK) (Rodent Popsicle Records / www.rodentpopsicle.com)

MONTY LOVE "Girls Are The New Boys" CD

Well, I gotta give these boys credit - they cover BIKINI KILL & CYNDI LAUPER. They give props to grrl bands in their own two minute short-n-sweet blasts. These guys put fun back into punk rock. (LD) (www.immigrantsun.com)

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MOTION PICTURE DEMISE "Rebuild / Reform" CD EP

Thick, full pop rock with lots of hooks and some heavy guitars. A little screaming like the kids like, too, but they do it right - buried in the background, full out screams, not just during the obvious breakdowns. Guest musicians include a dude from Lamb of God. Can't fuck with that, can you? I'm into this. (MWB) (www.orangepeal.com)

MOTO-LITAS "For The Greater Good" CD

An oldie but goodie. 4 gals play some exquisite guitar pop. Lo-fi but sweet. Garage but not grungy. The MUFFS if they came out of Britain in the early 80s armed only with the first GO-GOs LP. (RK) (Daemon Records / www.daemonrecords.com)

THE MOTORCYCLE PROM DATES SELF-TITLED HE SHUTUPS

A double-dose of Wisconsin punk'n'roll that's probably to soundtrack to every Sheboygan punk's friday night. Lotsa snotty leads, snarling vocals and full-speed-ahead drunk drumming. Neither band does anything to piss me off, but they don't get my toes tapping either. Ehhhhhhhhhh. (MC) (www.themotorcyclepromdates.8m.com, www.angelfire.com/punk/theshutups)

NAPALM DEATH "Leaders Not Followers Part 2" CD

This is absolutely awesome. NAPALM DEATH, who are one of the greatest metal bands ever (or are they grind? Whatever. They are fucking brutal) deliver 19 covers. Cover albums generally suck, but not when you have someone as great as ND digging into the crates of hardcore, metal, and thrash's vault for some classic tracks. They do everything from HELL-

HAMMER to AGNOSTIC FRONT, CRYPTIC SLAUGHTER to SEPULTURA, KREATOR to DAYGLO ABORTIONS. This is a must own for any NAPALM DEATH fan, of course, but is also a must own for any fan of extreme music. And this is PART 2. I gotta go find part one now. (STM) (www.centurymedia.com)

NECK "Here's Mud In Yer Eye!" CD

A retrospective / greatest hits from the London / Irish rockin and reelin psycho-celidh celtic band. Lots of banjo, whistle, fiddle and the 'usual' Irish stuff. Think FLOGGING MOLLY, POGUES (of course). They give it lots of bollocks, and do it well. Well worth checking out. (RK) (Hibernian Records / www.neck-neck.freemove.co.uk)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS "French Fries, Guillotine & Love" CD

The French have returned to punkdom in a BIG way in the past year. While I would put this band near the top of the heap, I'm sure many folks could get off on their snotty, poppy punk. This domestic release compiles the finest moments off of their many European releases. Far from great, but certainly good enough to get casual '77 punk fans going. Me? Take it or leave it... (MC) (www.dead-beat-records.com)

NEW BREED "Off The Beaten Path" CD

2nd release. And while it's nothing new - more of that spritely 'Celtic' street-punk along the lines of SWINGIN' UTTERS / DROPKICK MURPHY's - they do it well. And you could do alot worse than a mandolin. (RK) (Thorpe Records / www.thorprecords.com)

NEW TRUST "We Are Fast Moving Motherfuckers" CD

Here's a record that is played with heart. It's one of my favorites of the month. Coed indie rock with the soul of post-punk. Basically this record just rocks. It's got that special something & I hope to be hearing more from this band in the future. (LD) (www.slowdance.com)

NINETEEN FORTY-FIVE "I Saw A Bright Light" CD

An eclectic power rock trio. BREEDERS, or PIXIES spring to mind. They've definitely cut a huge swathe over most of the indie / college / alternative rubbish these days. Well worth discovering. Laidback guitar nonchalance at it's best. (RK) (Daemon Records / www.daemonrecords.com)

NINJA GUN "Smooth Transitions" CD

These guys sound like a bad mix between Foo Fighters and (ENTER ANY RADIO BAND NAME HERE). Definitely made for college kids who don't know any better. I'll pass. (MWB) (www.barracudasound.com)

NOODLE MUFFIN "Regime Change" CD

Unfortunately still as relevant as ever; this indie band have produced a wonderful 20 song CD of Bushisms, and reasons for some much-needed change around here. They masterfully cut up words from the Commander-In-Chief himself, with a variety of musical styles, tunes and songs. Sheer brilliance. Imagine that MONTY PYTHON music album, all targeting the man, and the Man. (RK) (www.noodlemuffin.com)

NORTH LINCOLN "Truth Is A Menace" CD

This is some really good punk rock from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Their songs are super catchy and very easy to get hooked on. It's weird - this record sounds like an instant classic, like I've heard it before. Please check this out. (LD) (www.noidearecords.com)

NO WARNING "Suffer, Survive" CD

All your kids who loved "Ill Blood" should find the members of Linkin Park and beat the shit out of them. NO WARNING: seriously, have we learned nothing from VOD? (STM) (www.yourradialdidn'tputanaddressonthepromo.com)

OCTOBER FILE

"Long Walk On A Short Pier" CD

Two adjectives that would describe this are goofy & monotonous. Funny thing is I think they're going for hard & devastating! Oof - don't take yourselves so seriously. They claim KILLING JOKE as one of their influences, so go figure. (LD) (www.octoberfile.com)

OFER

"Short Story Long" CD

I really enjoyed this debut from Silverlake native OFER. It's a very warm, honest pop record with a singer / songwriter backdrop. Meaning - it's really still just about the songs, but he adds strings, electric guitars & drums. His guitar playing is very inventive, and the drums are played by JOEY WARONKER. Highly recommended. (LD) (www.bwrmusic.com)

OLD CANES

"Early Morning Hymns" CD

There is a definite creaky, weathered feeling to this CD. Part PAUL WESTERBERG, part DANIEL JOHNSTON, with country flavoring and a mix of odd and traditional instruments. Features members of APPLESEED CAST, CASKET LOTTERY and MINUS STORY. I am listening to this pretty early in the morning, my eyes are bloodshot, I'm moving pretty slow and I have a hot cup of coffee beside me, right now this CD is really hitting the spot. (JC) (Second Nature Recordings / PO Box 413084 / Kansas City, MO 64141)

ONLY CHILDREN

"Change of Living" CD

More former rockers who've turned to country music. We've got members of HOT ROD CIRCUIT, THE ANNIVERSARY, & SOME GIRLS. I'd call this barroom country with heart. If you like this new trend, you can't go wrong with this offering. Best track - "Jesus Came Too Late." (LD) (www.theonlychildren.com)

ORANGE ISLAND

"The Morning After" CD EP

This is the latest release from the young band from Boston who's been making a name for themselves over the past year. Not bad - a five-song EP showcasing what makes the kids dig 'em. Melodic, dare I say emotional? - Rock and roll. Worth checking out if you're into it. (MWB) (www.riserecords.com)

ORGAN

"Grab That Gun" CD

Ladies from Canada are taking over! This band is getting press for their genuine early 80's new wave sound. They really do remind me of the SMITHS with a girl singer. Believe me, I don't take that statement lightly! I think these girls have got something special here, and the more songs I hear, the more I love the record! (LD) (www.mintrecs.com)

OTESANEK

self-titled CD

This is some serious dirgey evil shit. Each song takes quite a while to get going, but when it does, you're treated to some of the most guttural noises ever. Not for the faint of heart or someone seeking speed metal. This is as dark & slow as it comes. (LD) (www.electrichumanproject.com)

OVER IT / MIDPOINT / FIVE DAYS OFF /

NATIONAL PRODUCT

"Radio Songs" CD

This is a four-way split, very aptly named "Radio Songs." OVER IT have been hot shit among the mall-punk crowd, and this CD shows why, with three fast, catchy, hook-laden pop songs, and one acoustic track. It's definitely a good introduction to this band, if you aren't already familiar with them. MIDPOINT sound like they owe just as much to NOFX as they do to today's pop explosion, which is a nice change. The other bands aren't anything you've never heard. (MWB) (www.riserecords.com)

OWEN

"I Do Perceive" CD

Chicago's jack of all trades continues his solo effort with

this new LP. But this is no DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL crap. These 8 beautiful tracks are lush with acoustic & electric guitars & jazzy drums. And then there's the calming warm voice. This is his best album yet, so check it out. (LD) (www.polyvinylrecords.com)

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE, THE

"I Quit" CD

How can you not support a band that has a song called "You're A Shitty Dude"? That title alone is reason enough to buy this thing. Ok, so what do they sound like? Well, they rep the Northwest hardcore sound proudly but stand firm upon an old school rock n' roll foundation. Solid structures with hardcore passion. Good stuff. Fans of that Northwestern shizzy ala TRIAL and MODERN LIFE IS WAR will dig this hard. (STM) (www.rivalrecords.net)

PIG DESTROYER

"Terrifyer" CD

PD have always been an awesome grind band that created a cacophony that, while better than most grind bands, was still just a grind band. With this release, they seemed to be reaching for something more and have crafted 2 CD's worth of awesome metal insanity. It's still the same old PD that we all love, just a whole lot better! (STM) (www.relapserecords.com)

PISTOL GRIP

"Tear It All Down" CD

Straight forward punk rock done the way it should be done - fast. BYO continues to put out some of the best punk rock sounds around. PISTOL GRIP have the classic street punk sound, not too far removed from bands like STREET DOGS and ONE MAN ARMY. From start to finish, each track is a blast of energy and power, with not one single let-down. Go buy this CD! (MWB)

POTSHOT

"Dance To The Potshot Records" CD

And dance you may well indeed. Fifth full length from these Japanese ska-popsters. Mix up HI-STANDARD with the SPECIALS at their most upbeat, and it'll probably get your toe's a tappin'. (RK) (Asian Man Records / www.asianmanrecords.com)

RACE THE SUN

"The Rest of Our Lives is Tonight" CD

WARNING: THIS CD MAY BECOME YOUR NEW GUILTY PLEASURE. Yes, it's true, you fashion yourself to be a tough punk rocker and hate all that sissy shit that's being called punk these days. So don't listen to this CD, because you're going to get addicted. Reminiscent of FAIRWEATHER, with a slight does of old JIMMY EAT WORLD. Upbeat, addictive, and filled with hooks, this shit is good. (MWB) (www.fidelityrecords.com) (www.byorecords.com)

REDLIGHT HALO

"Make Your Maker" CD

Ha ha ha. Their press sheet says they're unique and gimmick free! But this mediocre slab is a direct derivative of so many 90's bands. They may mean well, but their brand of rock n'roll is just too played out. (LD) (no address)

REVEREND HORTON HEAT

"Revival" CD

Where previous releases from "The Rev" could act as soundtracks to Maker's Mark and cocaine fueled nights of delightfully hedonistic sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, "Revival" sound more like the background music to a day in the backyard with your buddies, drinkin' PBR, throwing horseshoes, and flipping tri tip on the BBQ. This album has a very relaxed feel, relying much more on bluesy rhythms and

honky tonk beats than the hurricane-like guitar licks and slap-crazy chugs of its predecessors. This is not to say that Horton is ready to hang up his boots. "Revival" contains all of the themes you would expect to hear from The Rev: girls, cars, and partying. And Horton is still very capable of making you want to get up and shake it like a southern Baptist. A refreshingly mellower sound from one of the most fun bands around. Exemplary Tracks: Revival, Someone in Heaven, Honky Tonk Girl. (DM) (Yep Roc Records / P.O. Box 4821, Chapel Hill, NC, 27515 / www.yeproc.com / www.reverendhorton-heat.com)

THE RISK TAKEN

"End Commence" CD

Fuck yes! Let me tell you, I can think of no greater a time to be a hardcore kid than back in the mid '90s - and this album scooped my ass up, put me in my old jncos and bball jerseys, and took me right back there. This is when hardcore was metallic rather than just being metal played by hardcore kids (and if you don't understand that, you just started going to shows three weeks ago). As soon as I put this thing on, I immediately thought of ONE KING DOWN and BROTHERS KEEPER and TURMOIL and DESPAIR and all those great mid '90s bands. I love this album. (STM) (www.stillbornrecords.com)

AMANDA ROGERS

"Daily News" CD

It's the TORI AMOS for the new millennium. A virtuoso with a voice and a heart of gold that's been wowing hipster punks & indie rockers. She's good for fans of AMIEE MANN & DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL. Highly recommended. (LD) (www.immigrantsun.com)

ROUTINEERS

self-titled CD

A brand new album featuring Amanda Mackaye, Ryan Nelson (BEAUTY PILL) & Bill Nesper (DISCOUNT). Amanda's vocals are very punk rock, sort of spoken DEAD KENNEDYS style. Most songs hover around two minutes which makes for a fun short record that really kicks ass in that special way that Dischord bands always do. (LD) (www.dischord.com)

SAHARA HOTNIGHTS

"Kiss & Tell" CD

The more I listen to this record, the more I like it. Definitely heavy on the '70s power pop, without coming off as simply retro. Some of the songs on this are just real damn good. For you older types out there, I would say there's a mix of NIKKI & the CORVETTES meets the UNDERTONES. The young 'uns out there might say The DONNAS meets The HIVES. (JC) (RCA / BMG)

THE SERMON

"Volume" CD

"High-energy" garage from San Francisco. A little too slick and showy for my tastes, but I appear to be the minority with that opinion. Imagine THE MOONEY SUZUKI spiked with MC5. You could do a lot worse...and a lot better. (MC) (www.alternativetentacles.com)

SHINOBU

"Herostratus vs. Time" CD

This is actually some pretty decent indie rock. A somewhat scratchy, lo-fi TED LEO. I bet the late John Peel would've loved this band. (RK) (Let's Go Records / www.lets Gorerecords.com)

SICK OF IT ALL

"Outtakes For The Outcast" CD

B-sides and bootlegs from the kings of old fashioned hardcore goodness. You should already know what's up with these boys, and even if you are not so into their new stuff, this album here may be a pleasant surprise. Sure, some of these tracks are rough around the edges, but you can tell that the Kollers and Co. are having tons of fun on these jams and that's all that really matters right? Includes covers and the classic human egg! (STM) (www.fatwreck.com)

SOUNDSCAPE

SICK OF IT ALL

"Outtakes For The Outcasts" CD

Their 8th or 9th full length, and this is the B-Sides and Rarities one from the hardcore legends. I suspect you'll know weather you want this or not, but the do damn fine covers of SHAM 69, MISFITS, HUSKER DU and the LAST RESORT, amongst the 15 tracks. Even with the bad HOUSE OF PAIN remix, this is another diamond in the rough. (RK) (Fat Wreck Chords / www.fatwreck.com)

SIMPLY WAITING

"The Subtle Dynamics Between the Windshield and the Rearview" CD

Slow, drawn-out, acoustic rock with some more up-tempo tunes thrown in for good measure. I'm really not sure what to make of this - it's not bad, but it's not overly impressive, either. There's a song here or there that make you think the next one is going to rock, but it never quite reaches its potential. These guys could be good someday if they stick with it. (MWB) (www.asmallvoicescreamsworld.com)

SLACKERS

"Close My Eyes" CD

NYC's SLACKERS have been around for a while - since '91. This is their 7th full length of ska, reggae and dancehall. They certainly have an easy swing about 'em. I suspect you already know if you'll want this...Y'know, SKATALLITES, BOB MARLEY, that kind of stuff. (RK) (Hellcat, via Epitaph / www.epitaph.com)

SLIM CESSNA'S AUTO CLUB

"The Bloody Tenant Truth Peace" CD

A sure satisfying slab of new school hillbilly music with a twist. Good story songs and overall quite enjoyable except for some of the more sonic stuff towards the end, which I don't think worked very well. (JC) (Alternative Tentacles / P.O. Box 419092 / San Francisco, CA 94141-9092)

SLINGSHOT DAKOTA

"Keener Sights" CD

This is my favorite new pop record. It's got everything - piano, guitars, great lyrics, perfectly blended voices. Pop played by tough looking people is the new shit! But seriously, get it. It's along the same lines as VERSUS & IMPERIAL TEEN. (LD) (www.immigrantsun.com)

ELLIOTT SMITH

"From a Basement on the Hill" CD

On October 21st, 2003, we lost one of our greatest contemporary singer / songwriters, Elliott Smith. So, how eerie is it that almost one year from the date of his death, his posthumous album is released, allowing him to speak to us all for the final time. There are a lot of strange, puzzling stories surrounding the release of this album (besides Smith's untimely death). Unlike Smith's last two albums, which were released on Dreamworks, "From a Basement on the Hill" was picked up by the brilliant Anti-. Also, the final production of "From a Basement..." was done by Smith's estate, causing speculation about whether or not this cut was the one Smith intended to be released. Whether that be the case or not, "From a Basement..." is a beautiful sounding final bow from Smith. What is missing here is the slicker, more produced feel of "XO" and "Figure 8" (Smith's albums on Dreamworks), which makes the fifteen tracks of "From a Basement..." sound much more like Smith's older releases on Kill Rock Stars and Cavity Search. While I feel Smith was always at the top of his game, I much prefer his stuff that sounded like it was recorded on a four track in a bathroom. Many discard Smith as just another "depressed" singer / song-



writer, but I have always felt that there was always so much more under that impression of Smith; something much more honest. We'll never know whether "From a Basement..." is exactly what Smith intended, but still, this will be regarded a gorgeous swan song from an artist who will be dearly missed. Exemplary Tracks: Pretty (Ugly Before), King's Crossing, Twilight, Memory Lane. (DM) (Anti, Inc. 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026 / www.anti.com)

SOMETHING ABOUT VAMPIRES AND SLUTS

"We Break Our Own Hearts" CD

Synth driven dark pop band. Lots of 80s influences are obvious, but they haven't managed to reproduce any of the pop hooks that made the likes of HEAVEN 17, The CURE and BERLIN such wonderful bands. Like a less gloomy 45 GRAVE... (RK) (VMS / Morpheus Records / www.morphius.com)

SOMETREE

"Moleskine" CD

This reminds me a little of APPLESEED CAST. It's got that atmospheric quality to it. Also a little RADIOHEAD. Some very nice melodies & neat ethereal guitar effects. Don't know if they're big in Europe - where they come from - but they should be. (LD) (www.magicbulletrecords.com)

SOUTHERLY

"Best Dressed & Expressionless" CD

This record is confusing. It wavers back & forth between beautiful arrangements to downright annoying vocals. It's one of those bands where you wish to god they only played instrumentals. Not the best. (LD) (www.deadletterrecords.com)

THE SPADES

"Learnin the Hard Way not to Fuck with..."

This band could also be called maybe The Schwarze-suckers or Electric Blackenstein. Solid high-energy rock and roll riffing all in the format of Chuck Berry as he has been interpreted through the ages through increasingly more powerful amplification and distortion and attitude. Big ass guitars hoarse shouted vocals "I'm gonna do this and that" "She was my this and that" cue guitar solo, bring it all home in a neat package just shy of 3 minutes. You like that? You will like this. I do. (TT) (www.gokartrecords.com)

SPLIT FIFTY

"We Live Forever" CD

This is pretty fucking good!! Think of a cross between RISE AGAINST and VISION. Not a bad mix! Fast, aggressive punk rock that mixes up tempos and sounds without a hitch. Bordering on Hardcore at some points, it manages to ride the fence between the two genres the way it should be done - without sissy screams and pretty melodies. FUCK YES!! (MWB) (www.hellbentrecords.com)

STAGE BOTTLES

"We Need...A New Flag" CD

Wow, this isn't what I expected. I see big tough skinheads. I see anti-Nazi symbols. I see names like Claf and Matthias. I'm expecting Oi! Nope. This is some decent straight forward punk rock. Definitely more classic punk than Oi! The singer has a good approach with a strong voice, and the band keeps their message positive. So if old school punk rock with elements of street punk is what you dig, check

these guys out. (MWB) (www.insurgence.net)

STAGE BOTTLES

"We Need A...New Flag" CD

4th or 5th (I reckon) full length from these longtime virulently anti-fascist German skinheads. And with this one, they've taken the melody, controlled fury and channeled aggression to new heights. At times, they almost have a poppy feel. Think of the best of early BUSINESS ("Official Bootleg" era) and early BLITZ (first album) combined with above average lyrics, and a healthy dose

of sax, and you're away...(RK) (Insurgence Records / www.insurgence.net)

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS

"Guitar And Drum" CD

It's weird, the CD case says STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, the one sheet bio thing that came with it says the same. I took the cd out of player and sure enough on there it said STIFF LITTLE FINGERS also. So why when I listen to it, do I not hear a STIFF LITTLE FINGERS fucking record? Weak, super polished pop. What a shame. (JC) (Kung Fu / www.kungfurecords.com)

STILL LIFE PROJECTOR

"The Dance Riot" CD

They do the pop / emo thing that is so big right now. These guys sound like a cross between Coheed and Cambria and Fairweather. If you're into either of these bands, or better yet, both, you'll dig them. (MWB) (www.riserecords.com)

STOCKYARD STOICS

"Catastrophe" CD

Snotty street punk, in the vein of THE UNSEEN or A GLOBAL THREAT, with a nod to the likes of ANTI-FLAG or THE BRIGGS. Nothing ground-breaking here. They don't stray from the punk rock street map, but what they do, they do well. (MWB) (www.bankshotrecords.com)

STRAYLIGHT RUN

self-titled CD

I have a lot of respect for anyone who can see that they have their meal ticket punched but give it all up because it's not what they want. That's what two of the dudes in this band did when they quit the super-group TAKING BACK SUNDAY. Not many people would have the balls to walk away from a wallet full of money, but they did, and that's respectable. So what do you do for an encore? Apparently, you start a slow, piano-driven acoustic rock band with your sister. STRAYLIGHT RUN isn't going to blow you away with anthemic rock songs, but their musicianship shows on this effort. I'll go out on a limb and say that not too many people would give a second thought to this band if it wasn't played up as "ex-members of TAKING BACK SUNDAY," but it is, so they have. Nothing worth writing home about here, but a solid effort if acoustic rock is your bag. (MWB) (www.victoryrecords.com)

STREET DOGS

"Tale Of Mass Deception" CD EP

4 tracks. Two from their debut CD, and two from the forthcoming full-length. Melodic punk from the 'streets' (whatever that means - I believe we are all frequent users of the 'streets') from the old DROPKICK MURPHY's singer. Personally, I think the STREET DOGS are far superior band to his previous effort. Hopefully this little sampler shows why. (RK) (Brass Tacks Records / www.crosscheckrecords.com)

STRIKEFORCE DIABLO

"The Albatross & The Architect" CD

This little three-piece has got a good thing going. The rhythm section sounds like a two-headed monster, meaning they are so in sync, it sounds like one person. Really creative changes & stuff. This is grown up hardcore. Very good. (LD) (www.noidearecords.com)

STRUNG OUT

"Exile In Oblivion" CD

5th album, that fuses their now patented band of melodic punk, metal, and progressive rock. And they do it well. Even SLAYER's producer can't make em sound bad. Soaring vocals, metallic riffs, and driving melodies make this another winner. (RK) (Fat Wreck Chords / www.fatwreck.com)

STRUNG OUT

"Exile in Oblivion" CD

I'm going to preface my comments by saying that I have never been a huge fan of STRUNG OUT. Now, after saying that, this CD is pretty decent. It's got some high points (Blueprint of the Fall, Her Name in Blood) - and it's got some low points (Vampires). When this release is good, it's

really good. But when it's bad, it's really bad. Some of the songs have a real radio rock, college dude guy feel to them, which is too bad because it detracts from what overall is a very positive release. If you were already a fan of STRUNG OUT, you're going to eat this shit up with a spoon. (MWB) (www.fatwreck.com)

MISSION HOLD

"What Holds Back The Elephant" CD

Their third full length in ten years, and on this one, the anarcho avant-garde punkers have really surpassed themselves. The packaging is stunning, with lyrics in three languages; and the music has really matured. There's still lots of the EX, and GANG OF FOUR, but they play with a lot more space, comfort, and explore more texture and silence. It brings to mind the poise and clarity of CRASS's "Penis Envy." A stellar effort. (RK) (G7 Welcoming Committee Records / www.g7welcoming-committee.com)

SWEET J.A.P.

"I'm Only Moonlight" b / w "Found There 'No Go'" 7"

If you haven't heard or seen Sweet Japanese American Princess yet, you are seriously fucking up. Take the snottiness of classic 90s Japanese punk like REGISTRATORS or YOUNG ONES and mix it up with some hardcore ferocity and you'll get a good idea of the greatness this band is capable of. Dirtnap delivers two more stunning tracks that are sure to please fans and (hopefully) make quite a few converts. Buy a record player...then buy this record. (MC) (www.dirtnaprecs.com)

SWEET POISON

"Yesterday's Sweethearts" CD

Debut full length from the Belgian 'street-punk' band. They definitely have a melodic, hard-bitten SOCIAL DISTORTION edge to their sound, and some piano and female backing vocals (courtesy of the lead guitarist) help 'em stand a little above the usual BRUISERSesque fare. (RK) (Street Anthem Records / www.streetanthemrecords.com)

A TASTE FOR MURDER

"Italian Girls (The Best in the World)" CD

I had never heard of these dudes, but now I'm definitely a fan of this band. Straight forward hardcore. It breaks no new ground, taking a traditional approach to the genre, but they do it the right way. Ten songs, one of which is over 8 minutes, and even that one rules. And I usually lose interest at the 5-minute mark! How can you go wrong with a song called Bad News Bears? You can't! And the artwork is pretty rad, too. (MWB)

(www.highfidelityrecords.com)



TAXI

"Who's To Blame" b/w "Down By Love" 7" / CD-R

Taxi has a new 7" out. Of course, I only have a CD-R of it. LAME. Send in the fucking RECORD! Whatever. I can't say I'm too disappointed though, as this band continues to ride the wave of mediocrity as far as it'll take them. They are clearly influenced by all the great Euro "Killed By Death" stuff, but man, they just can't get it right. Yuck. (MC) (www.dead-beat-records.com)

THESE ARMS ARE SNAKES

"Oxeneers - Or The Lion Sleeps When Its Antelope Go Home" CD

Sometimes concept albums are brilliant. THE WHO's "Quadrophenia", for example. But this one by former members of BOTCH & KILL SADIE falls short. Written as a short story while one of the members worked at a check cashing place, it's a good idea that just isn't backed up by solid tunes. Pick up their previous album, "This Is Meant To Hurt You," for a better sample of what these folks can really do. (LD) (www.jadetree.com)

THESE ENZYMES

"Henry" CD

Here's some new hardcore for you diehards. I don't hear anything special here but maybe you will. Former members of the ALL AMERICAN REJECTS. They name drop CONVERGE, but frankly, they don't come close to a band as great as that. (LD) (www.doghouserecords.com)

THIS PROVIDENCE

"Our Worlds Divorce" CD

Though this band uses some cliched stops-n-starts and guitar riffs, they still manage to form a basically unique sound. It's a combination of pop punk, indie rock, & technical math rock. The drumming is especially top notch. And the vocals are much more than the regular juvenile shit. Good job! (LD) (www.rocketstar.com)

THIS PROVIDENCE

"Our Worlds Divorce" CD

This is an emo band, for sure. But it's emo before pop-punk became emo. Reminiscent of old Jimmy Eat World, old Piebald, old Get Up Kids, even Braid. So basically, they'll remind you of all of the "legends" of the genre that no longer exists and is now just a synonym for pop-punk. But the good thing is they're not just replaying the same old tired stuff - they do something to make it their own. If you're a sucker for the pop with the hooks that had kids holding their backpack straps and swaying back in 1998, you'll dig this. (MWB) (www.rocketstar.com)

A THORN FOR EVERY HEART

"Things Aren't So Beautiful Now" CD

Haven't I heard this before? Oh yeah, that's right, this is what every band sounds like! They're pop, they're hardcore, they sing, they scream...how original! (MWB) (www.kickballrecords.com)

THE THRILLS

"Let's Bottle Bohemia"

I'm gonna make a documentary about the year Pavement toured on Lollapalooza and call it "The Year Irony Broke." That year with the song "Cut Your Hair" Stephen Malkmus ushered in this kind of clever smarmy ironical crap where kitsch is king and someone would put a song like Whatever Happened to Corey Haim on a record as THE THRILLS do on "Let's Bottle Bohemia." Pavement however had something, some kind of true geeky muscle. These guys just amuse themselves. There is nothing at all thrilling about this record except how taken with their own smug cleverness these guys are. (TT)

(www.virginrecords.com)

TOKYO SMASH

"The Scene Queen Reigns Supreme" CD

Thirteen-year-old girls totally love this. Cross NFG with inexperience. (STM) (www.recorserrecords.com)

TOXIC REASONS

"Dedication 1979 / 1988" LP

A new re-issue of an OK album. TOXIC REASONS put out one amazing record, "Independence," and were a great band. This record is more in the bands decline, still worth picking up, but only after you have listened to "Independence" about 30 times. (JC) (Re-force / Germany)

TRILLION BARNACLE LAPSE

"A Cruise In Heaven" CD

I'd call this a rock band with a lot of goth and new-wave influences. You can hear their love of the CURE in the guy's airy vocals. It's that thing that ROBERT SMITH does at the end of a phrase where he kind of drops the note. Anyway, this dude's got it down. The guitars are a little metal.

Ultimately this is for the grown up AFI fan. (LD) (no address)

Tsunami Bomb

"The Definitive Act" CD

I'm sure you all know them by now. The premier girl-fronted punk band out there today. I'm not usually one to dig girl sings, and to tell you the truth, I have never really listen to Tsunami Bomb before. Well I should have - this is a quality release, mixing up the styles all the way. Some songs have a bit of a new-wave 80s feel, while some are a bit harder, and it's all filled with ample amounts of pop. From top to bottom, this is a real solid effort. (MWB) (www.kungfurecords.com)

THE TWILIGHT SINGERS

"She Loves You" CD

When THE AFGHAN WHIGS officially disbanded in 2001, it caused sorrow for their fans who fell in love with their blend of dirty rock n' roll and the smooth sounds of 60's R&B / Soul. However, soon after the death of THE WHIGS, front man Greg Dulli introduced his long talked about project, THE TWILIGHT SINGERS, thus comforting all who believed rock would never be sexy again. Throughout his career, Dulli has never attempted to belie the power

women have over him, juxtaposing tales of how women have been able to slay him or raise him from the grave. With "She Loves You", Dulli pays homage to adoration (be it sweet or bittersweet) by covering some of the most beautiful and honest love songs ever written. In revamping songs by HOPE SANDOVAL, COLTRANE, GERSHWIN, BJORK, GAYE, and even MARY J. BLIGE, Dulli masterfully avoids stepping on their toes while making these tunes his own. Not all of the tales have a pretty ending, ranging from elation to heartbreak; but hey, that's love isn't it. Could very well be Spanish Fly on compact disc. Exemplary Tracks: Too Tough to Die, Strange Fruit, Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair. (DM) (www.thetwilightssingers.com)

UNDERMINED

"Hail Unamerican" CD

Not quite DEAD GUY. More badly decomposed Guy. Tough guy metallic hardcore, with lots of crunch, hoarse vocals and breakdowns. For sure it'll get the moshers with tats and goatees punching the floor. (RK) (Kung Fu Records / www.kungfurecords.com)

UNTIL THE END

"The Blind Leading The Lost" CD

It's been three years and they gotten themselves a new singer, but these Florida heavyweights return with the brick-layer heavy metallic hardcore that they are renowned for. Fans of HATEBREED, EMBRACE TODAY, and a keyboardless BLEEDING THROUGH should take heed of this unit. (STM) (www.eulogyrecordings.com)

USELESS INTENT

"Destined For Failure" CD

Speedy, snotty, OC punk. An amped up DI, without the catchy anthems. Still, it drives along at a brisk pace, and is a cut above most of what passes for 'street-punk' these days. (RK) (Adlab Records / PO Box 5118 / Orange, CA 92863)

VANISHING

"Still Lifes Are Failing" CD

Devastating new album from bay area expatriates. Obviously inspired by their retro pasts - by bands like SISTERS OF MERCY & BIRTHDAY PARTY. But they've really forged their own sound & broken out of that dark-wave dancey mold. With two members now living in Berlin, here's hoping they stay creative & come back soon for shows. The album will have to tide us over. P.S. - do not miss the videos! (LD) (www.goldstandardlabs.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Bankshot! Records Presents: Mass Desruction"

A pretty decent compilation, with mostly punk rock bands and a few acoustic tracks thrown in. The acoustic tracks sound somewhat awkward when mixed with the rest of the bands on here, but overall, this one is pretty good. 26 bands, including UNION 13, CHOKING VICTIM, KILL YOUR

SOUNDSCAPE

IDOLS, LEFTOVER CRACK, THE LAWRENCE ARMS, and THE DAYCARE SWINDLERS. (MWB)
(www.bankshotrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Broken Lamps & Hardcore Memories vol. 2" CD
2nd collection of some of the more modern sounds masquerading as punk, hardcore and metal these days. ATREYU, DEATH BY STERO, MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD, NORA, WITH HONOR, MISERY SIGNALS and 20 or so more. Lots of chugga chugga, breakdowns and mosh. (RK)
(Pastepunk / www.pastepunk.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

In Honor: A Compilation to Beat Cancer CD
Another great comp, another great cause. This time the money goes towards funding the fight against cancer, with one of the benefiting parties being the Sean McGrath foundation. For those who don't know, Sean McGrath was a critical part of the New Jersey punk rock scene, taking part in bands such as Mouthpiece and Saves the Day, who tragically lost his battle to cancer this past spring. Cancer knows no race, religion, gender, or age. Do your part - go buy this CD. Oh, and the music is good, too - The Descendents, Jawbreaker, None More Black, Only Crime, and a ton more. We all know someone who has been afflicted with cancer in one form or another - let's help out. (MWB)
(www.vagrant.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Mein Comp" 7"EP
A.M.P. readers have long been exposed to Scooter's Bushbashing, and as much as I like her, Ms. Scoot's attack on Bush wasn't angry enough for me. Thankfully, Mark McCoy, singer for DAS OATH and CHARLES BRONSON, and his Youth Attack label have unleashed a compilation showcasing some of the finest hardcore bands going today venting on that asshole that heads our country. Perhaps it's too little, too late...but screaming along with LIMP WRIST, REAGAN SS, TEAR IT UP and KNIFE FIGHT gives me temporary solace. Find at all costs. GET MORE PISSED OFF. (MC)
(Youth Attack, no address)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"My Favorite Song Writers" CD
It's songs like these that make four more years of Dubya seem manageable (barely). You get brand new recordings from the songwriters from NO KNIFE, CURSIVE, SPARTA & CAVE-IN, to name a few. This label's 10th release is one that really puts them on the map. Highly recommended! (LD)
(www.fiveoneinc.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Pain In The Big Neck" CD
Big Neck Records is one of "the heavies" in the genres I tend to find myself excited by, namely garage and '77 punk rock. This is their first compilation and they really pulled out all the stops. Normally, when a label resorts to putting out CD compilations, it's a sure fire sign that things are going downhill. Not the case with this comp, which is one of the best releases this label has ever unleashed. You get exclusive tracks from label mainstays like BASEBALL FURIES, SWEET J.A.P. and RADIO BEATS along with choice cuts from some of the best young bands around today (CATHOLIC BOYS, MHZ, LOST SOUNDS). Good stuff and a perfect introduction to REAL punk rock in 2004. (MC)
(www.bigneckrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

A Santa Cause CD
I don't want to knock this thing because a portion of the proceeds go to charity, but to be perfectly honest, this Christmas album makes me consider converting to Judaism. With the exception of NFG and The AKAS and Far, this album is pretty stupid. What you have is all your phony mallpunk pretty boy Warped bullshit bands playing Christmas jingles. Awesome. All I want for Christmas is a gun with one bullet so that I don't have to live in a world where these bands are considered credible. (STM)
(www.immortalrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Take Action Vol. 4" CD
2 discs, 41 tracks, impeccable cause. Unreleased tracks from NOFX, AGAINST ME, BRANDSTON and BRAZIL, with

37 classics from everyone from DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN to TED LEO. Tis goodly. So get it. (RK)
(Sub City / www.subcity.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Take Action! Volume 4 CD
This is the fourth installment of the annual Take Action! series from Sub City. As with the prior three, proceeds from the sales go to a charity - in this case, it's the National Hopeline Network, who work tirelessly to help those who are contemplating suicide. As with the other releases, the music is simply a way to raise awareness for the topic at hand, with liner notes and material on the CD itself helping fight against Suicide. A great release, if not only for the music, for the message it carries. With tracks from Against Me!, NOFX, Dillinger 4, The Break, Taking Back Sunday, A Wilhelm Scream, and about 35 more, you have to pick this up. It's for a good cause and you get good music. It's as simple as that. (MWB)
(www.subcity.net)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"This Is Indie Rock - The Best Bands You've Never Heard" CD
Well, the name of the comp says it all. Deep Elm has given us such bands as CLAIR DE LUNE & WINTER IN ALASKA. Something special to note: this is an "indie rock" compilation, not an "emo" one. How strange! Anyway there's some good stuff on here, so check it out! (LD)
(www.deepest.com)

VERSE

"Rebuild" CD
The boys over at Rival have done it again. Members of WHAT FEED THE FIRE comprise this awesome band that plays postmodern hardcore with a complete disregard with what's "cool." These kids just kick out the jams and lay to waste all in their path with emotional hardcore goodness that will make you think as much as it will make you mosh. Fans of AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, SUICIDE FILE, and any other fast but emotional hardcore need to check this band out.
(www.rivalrecords.net)

VICTORY AT SEA

"Memories Fade" CD
I have discovered something beautiful. From the first few seconds, I was right there with this record. The music is astounding. Their rhythms make you feel you're being tossed about at sea. When the vocals come in, it's a little shocking, but they are so heart wrenching that they won me over quickly. Get this if you like swarthy rockers such as TOM WAITS, BLACK HEART PROCESSION or PJ HARVEY. (LD)
(www.gernblandsten.com)

VOICE IN THE WIRE

"Signals in the Transmission" CD
Wow, this is really good. It's always rad to get a disc from a band you've never heard of and really dig. It reminds me of Small Brown Bike, or maybe older Hot Water Music, without Chuck's growl. Fast-paced up-tempo punk rock. This full length has 12 songs, and not one of them is a let-down. This one is definitely worth checking out. (MWB)
(www.eyeballrecords.com)

TOM WAITS

"Real Gone" CD
Tom Waits is a difficult man to elucidate. Reviewing his albums for a person unfamiliar with Waits style is like explaining over the phone how to solve the Rubik's Cube. But, for those of you who are well schooled with the style of Waits, "Real Gone" is more of the same avant-garde, crazy-ass circus music stuff, but for this album the piano has been replaced with a turntable. Sound weird, huh? Of course it does, it's Tom Waits. And it's brilliant. You've got to respect a man who incorporates the chamberlain, cigar box banjo, and a DJ into his songs. Waits voice has never sounded better (that means it's as gruff and insane as ever) and he really comes off like he's having the time off his life. Be forewarned, to truly appreciate Waits there has to be a little something darkening your heart, rotting in your brain, mischievous in your soul, as well as a very open mind and a lot of patience for the obscure. If this applies, you'll love "Real Gone" and its tales of misfits, murder, betrayal, and the darker side of love. Exemplary Tracks: Sins of My Father,

Dead and Lovely, Circus, Make it Rain. (DM)
(Anti, Inc. 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026 / www.anti.com)

THE WANTEDS

"Let Go Afterglow" CD
I've said it before. Really nice packaging & promo kits do not make up for boring and crappy music. I feel bad saying that, but I gotta give it to you straight. This sounds like a bedroom recording that some poor dude slaved over in the dark - and it is! The songs are just not there. (LD)
(www.thewanted.com)

THE WET TONES

"Mucho Reverbo" CD
Sometimes it's just about having fun and these guys know it. Surf guitars, tikis, spies, mad scientists and more. Think PHANTOM SURFERS and SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET. (JC)
(Ammonia)

THE WARRIORS

"War Is Hell" CD
I had heard so much hype on this band around these parts that I almost lost all interest before I had even heard them. And then I caught their show at Gilman and was absolutely blown away. This was one of the most entertaining, dynamic, energetic, and goddamn awesome bands I had seen in a long time. It was the type of set that makes you want to start a band. And now, here is the album. While it is nearly impossible for great live bands to capture their vibe on wax, this band comes real fucking close. The key ingredient is the vocals. While shrill and may sit a little uneasily with some listeners, this motherfuckers voice just burns with passion, conviction, and determination. He is purging, it seems, and condemning at the same time. Everyone can yell into a mic, they can scream and growl and blah blah blah, but here, you can feel that this dude feels it deep down in your bones. Imagine that righteous rage that you hear in Zach De La Rocha's voice; this kid has that. And speaking of Zach, these boys here do a wicked Bulls On Parade live. Oh, shit, I just realized that I haven't described the sound. OK. This band is very FALL SILENT to me, and by that I mean it's a hardcore band with some subtle hip-hop influence (groove and vibe wise, not retard Limp Bizkit wise) with tasty two-step / floorpunch danceparts and extra chunky kickboxer breakdowns. The vocals are also very FS, as they do that high-pitched squawk deal that Levi Watson used to bust (I mean that in the best possible way). Look, fuck, this album is great. Look how much I just typed! Go buy it, dummy. (STM)
(www.eulogyrecordings.com.com)

WINTER IN ALASKA

"Innocence We've Lost" CD
Another great shoegazer-inspired band. Nice long instrumental parts filled with shimmery guitar. Guy / girl harmonies that are rich & sweet. Recommended for fans of the APPEASED CAST or WHEAT. I like it a lot. (LD)
(www.vikingfuneralrecords.com)

WITH OR WITHOUT YOU

"Six Reasons To Drop Out" CD
The term "real" gets thrown about a lot in this little game we call hardcore. Well, this album is real. The lyrics are honest, the music is passionate, and the whole goddamned thing feels a thousand times more sincere than every other hardcore band out there. This features members of DIEHARD YOUTH, but that should leave you thinking that this is run-of-the-mill posicore. No, this is just raw melodic hardcore that concerns itself only with being honest in it's sentiments and riffs. If you need a comparison, think of INSTED, some of 7 SECONDS more passionate tunes, and some latter day Rev like BT1000 and BATTERY. (STM)
(www.martyrecords.com)

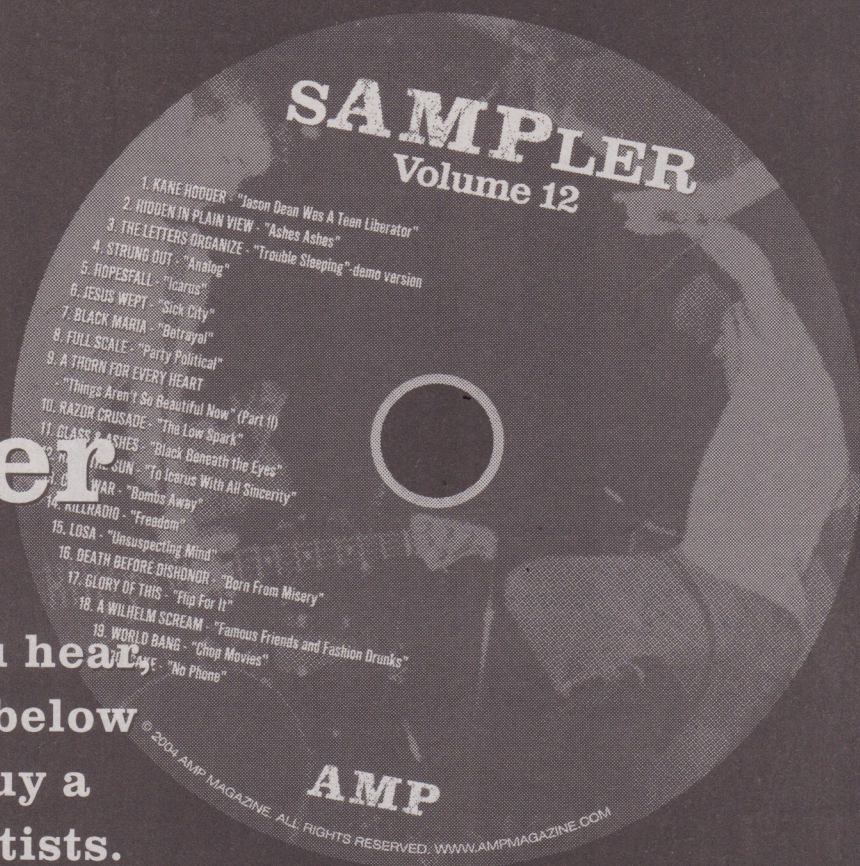
THE Y EQUALS

"Consume Regurgitate Resume" CD
These guys play a melodic brand of hardcore. Balancing both harmonies and straight forward hardcore, they're doing the kind of thing that Hopesfall is doing, with some songs that have a bit of a post-hardcore feel. Not bad, especially for what seems to be a self-released CD. (MWB)
(www.theyequals.com)

sAMPLer

Volume 12

If you like what you hear,
check out the info below
and go out and buy a
record from the artists.



TRACK 1
BAND: KANE HODDER
SONG: "Jason Dean Was A Teen Liberator"
RECORD: The Pleasure To Remain So Heartless
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Cowboy vs Sailor
WEB: www.hodderrock.com



TRACK 2
BAND: HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW
SONG: "Ashes Ashes"
RECORD: TBD
RELEASE DATE: 2/22/05
LABEL: Drive-Thru Records
WEB: www.hiddeninplainview.com
www.drivethrurecords.com



TRACK 3

BAND: THE LETTERS ORGANIZE
SONG: "Trouble Sleeping" - demo version
RECORD: TBA
RELEASE DATE: Spring 2005
LABEL: Nitro Records
WEB: www.thelettersorganize.com



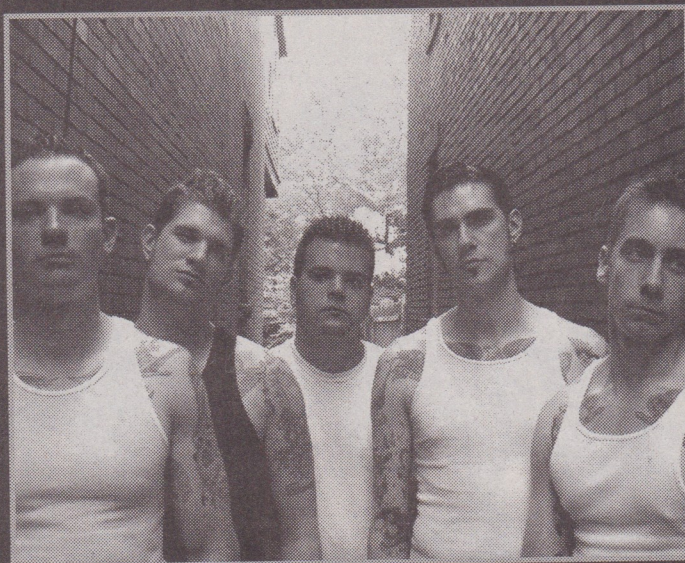
TRACK 4

BAND: STRUNG OUT
SONG: "Analog"
RECORD: Exile In Oblivion
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Fat Wreck Chords
WEB: www.fatwreck.com



TRACK 5

BAND: HOPESFALL
SONG: "Icarus"
RECORD: A Types
RELEASE DATE: Out Now!
LABEL: Trustkill
WEB: www.hopesfall.com
www.trustkill.com



TRACK 6

BAND: JESUS WEPT
SONG: "Sick City"
RECORD: Sick City
RELEASE DATE: Out now!
LABEL: Strike First Records
WEB: www.strikefirstrecords.com



TRACK 7

BAND: BLACK MARIA

SONG: "Betrayal"

RECORD: Lead Us To Reason

RELEASE DATE: 1/25/04

LABEL: Victory Records

WEB: www.victoryrecords.com



TRACK 8

BAND: FULL SCALE

SONG: "Party Political"

RECORD: TBD

RELEASE DATE: Early 2005

LABEL: Columbia Records

WEB: www.fullscale.com.au



TRACK 9

BAND: A THORN FOR EVERY HEART

SONG: "Things Aren't So Beautiful Now" (Part II)

RECORD: Things Aren't So Beautiful Now

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Kickball Records

WEB: www.athornforeveryheart.com



TRACK 10

BAND: RAZOR CRUSADE

SONG: "The Low Spark"

RECORD: Infinite Water

RELEASE DATE: 01/04/05

LABEL: Deathwish, Inc

WEB: www.deathwishinc.com



TRACK 11

BAND: GLASS & ASHES

SONG: "Black Beneath the Eyes"

RECORD: Aesthetic Arrest

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: No Idea Records

WEB: www.noidearecords.com

www.glassandashes.cjb.net



TRACK 12

BAND: RACE THE SUN

SONG: "To Icarus With All Sincerity"

RECORD: The Rest Of Our Lives Is Tonight

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Fidelity Records

WEB: www.racethesunrock.com

www.fidelityrecords.com



TRACK 13

BAND: COLD WAR

SONG: "Bombs Away"

RECORD: From Russia With Love

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Indecision Records

WEB: www.indecisionrecords.com



TRACK 14

BAND: KILLRADIO

SONG: "Freedom"

RECORD: Raised on Whipped Cream

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Columbia Records

WEB: www.killradiorevolution.com



TRACK 15

BAND: LOSA

SONG: "Unsuspecting Mind"

RECORD: The Perfect Moment

RELEASE DATE: 2/8/05

LABEL: Metal Blade Records

WEB: www.losa.nu



TRACK 16

BAND: DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR

SONG: "Born From Misery"

RECORD: Friends Family Forever

RELEASE DATE: 01/25/05

LABEL: Bridge Nine

WEB: www.bridge9.com



TRACK 17

BAND: GLORY OF THIS

SONG: "Flip For It"

RECORD: Adoration

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Indianola Records

WEB: www.indianolarecords.com



TRACK 18

BAND: A WILHELM SCREAM

SONG: "Famous Friends and Fashion Drunks"

RECORD: Mute Print

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Nitro Records

WEB: www.awilhelmscream.com



TRACK 19

BAND: WORLD BANG

SONG: "Chop Movies"

RECORD: Music 4 Dummiyz

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Indecent Media

WEB: www.indecntmedia.com



TRACK 20

BAND: CAKE

SONG: "No Phone"

RECORD: Pressure Chief

RELEASE DATE: Out Now!

LABEL: Columbia Records

WEB: www.cakemusic.com

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 THE WPP - BAAMI JAAMI ODEP
 THE RUM DIARY - POISONS THAT SAVE LIVES CD/ORANGE VINYL
 UNDER A DYING SUN - SUPERNOVA CD/RED VINYL

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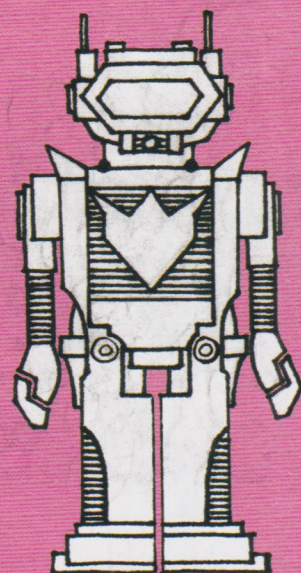


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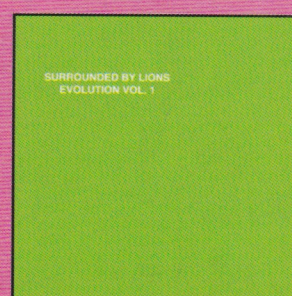
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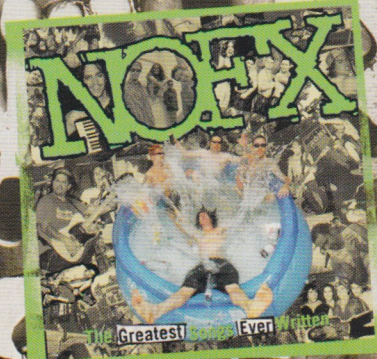
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SAMPLER

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